

Brief History of Park Lane Chapel,

Netherend, Cradley

With Illustrations

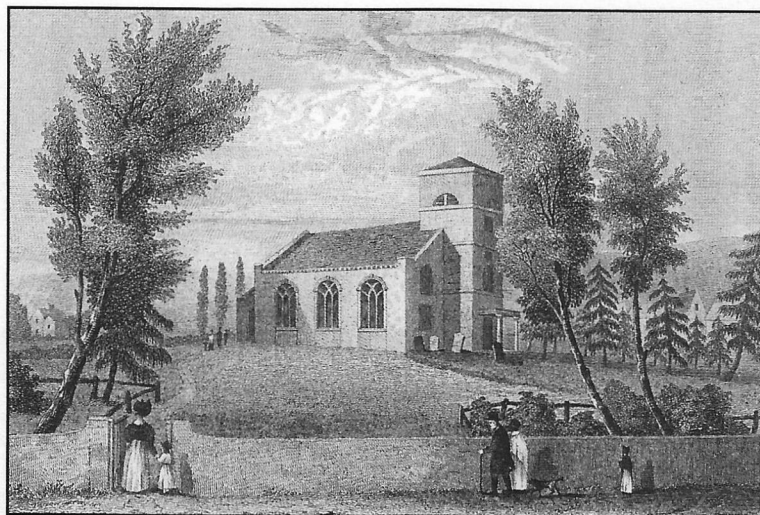
Prepared by Rev. A. J. Heale

& Diary of the War Years 1939-45

at

Netherend Chapel

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Transcribed from the original documents
By Jill Guest August 2005

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Printed by Waterloo Design & Print plc
Reliance House, Birmingham Street, Halesowen

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I first saw these books several years ago when they were returned to Park Lane Chapel by Rev. Heale's son. The History of Park Lane Chapel is in the form of a scrapbook, with handwritten notes and pictures, which is as the original. The Diary of the War years is a much larger handwritten document. I have extracted local and national information about the War rather than personal information and information about the Unitarian Church.

The books remain the property of Park Lane Unitarian Church; no part may be reproduced without their permission.

I would like to thank the Trustee's of Park Lane Unitarian Church for allowing me to read and transcribe these books.

Jill Guest
August 2005

**Brief History of Park Lane Chapel,
Netherend, Cradley.
With Illustrations,
Prepared by Rev.A.J.Heale**

Origin of the Park Lane Chapel-Netherend-Cradley-in the Counties of Worcestershire &Stafford.

- 1662 The Act of Uniformity resulted in the ejection of Nonconformist clergy-
several came to reside in Stourbridge area.
- 1668 The Bower House-Cradley-was licensed for Nonconformist
Worship.
- 1704 The Rev.Josiah Bassett was appointed minister and ‘ Pensnett
Meadow’ purchased for the erection of a Meeting House.
- 1707 The Meeting House opened for worship.
- 1715 The Meeting House was burnt down during the Sacheverell riots.
The Congregation returned to worship at the Bower House.
- 1716 The Meeting House was rebuilt; used until 1796

Ministers of the Pensnett Meadow Meeting House

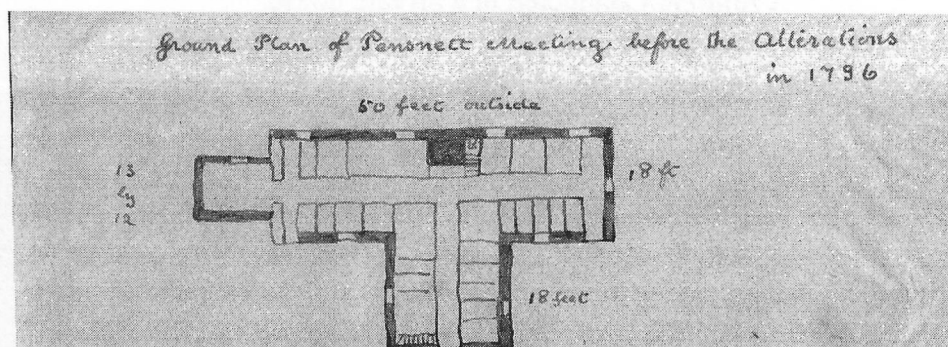
- 1704-1736 Josiah Bassett
- 1735-1745 Joseph Fownes
- 1745-1762 Noah Jones
- 1762-1789 Joseph Baker
- 1789-1796 James Scott

The old Meeting House was sold to the Wesleyan Methodists, and opened for worship by them on the following Sunday.

The two extending upper portions of the building (letter T) were separated from the main building and used as cottages, the central portion only was used for worship.

Later the old Meeting House itself was converted into cottages.

The buildings were demolished just before the outbreak of the present war.



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No of sittings at 18 inches

On the ground floor 186

In the front gallery 50

The East Gallery 58

The West Do 58

352

Developments at Netherend

- 1743 Purchase of land in the village of Netherend
- 1746 A charity school was founded for the education of 30 poor Children. Conducted in a private house.
- 1753 The first school building was erected
- 1788 The Charity school was closed for one year,
A Sunday School was opened, this institution has had a continuous existence.
- 1789 Two Charity schools were opened.
The old building continued to be used as a boy's school.
The new building used as a girls school.
- 1945 The old building retained by the congregation for week day social gatherings-meetings, etc.
The second building used as a school by the Worcestershire County Education Authorities.



Charity school, Teacher Mr Homer about the year 1869

The Netherend Parsonage

1743 Purchase of the land

1753 The Parsonage built—

- a. Beams of the roof and floorboards said to be of trees cut from The Park— from which Park Lane takes its name.
- b. Queen Anne staircase.
- c. Hand-painted panel windows- French style bow leading to the garden.
- d. An original 'powdering cupboard' in the guest room- above the dining room-kitchen.
- e. Hand painted window of monastic ruin- thought to be the work of James Scott-1796-1826. Probably the ruin of Hales Owen abbey. -



1945 The Parsonage The Rev A J & Mrs Lydia Heale
at the entrance to the sitting room.



1902-1924 Photographs of the Parsonage and garden during the ministry of the Rev.
Arrowsmith Hyde Shelley.

Inscription on back of one of the pictures-

'Mikey Shelley sends his portrait with love to Gwineth ?

Christmas 1916.

The Park Lane Chapel –Netherend –Cradley

Opened for Worship May 15th 1796- Print of the Old Chapel



Across the private carriage way, immediately behind the assembling congregation, stands the
Parsonage

Ministers of The Park Lane Chapel 1796-1932

1796-1806 James Scott

1807-1816 Benjamin Carpenter

1817-1821 Thomas Warren

1828-1850 William Bowen

1850-1885 William Cochrane

1885-1891 James Crossley

1891-1894 Arthur Ellis O'Connor

1894-1902 Edward Potter Hall

1902-1924 Arrowsmith Hyde Shelley

1924-1932 John Yeomans

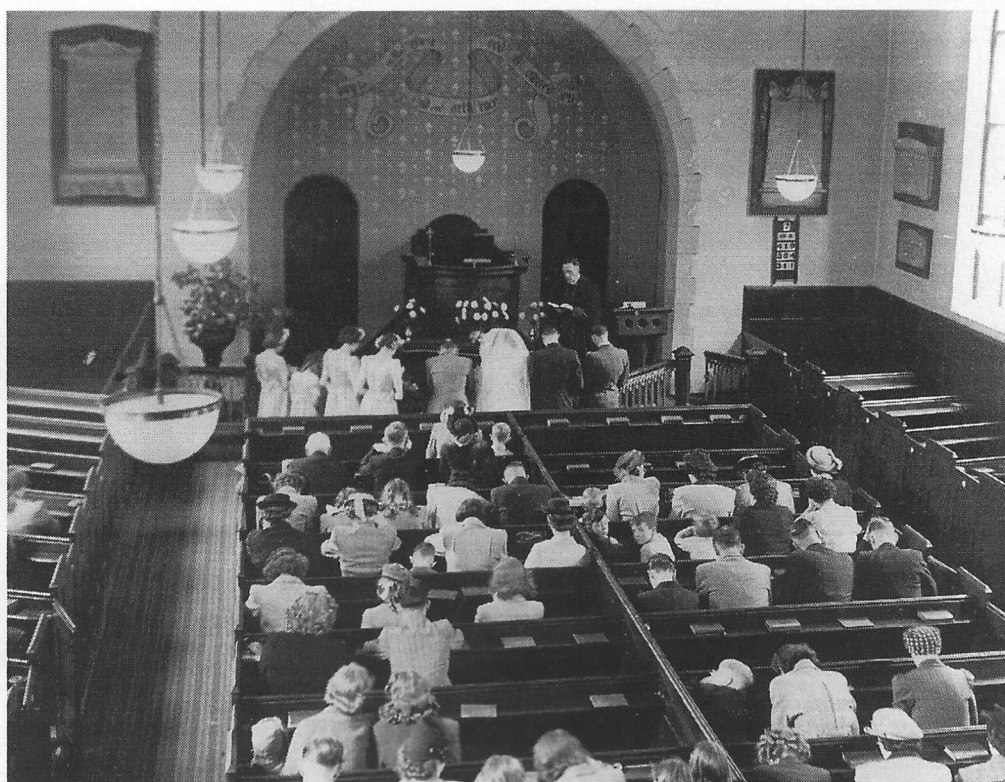
1932- Alfred James Heale

Park Lane Chapel 1942





1924 Interior of the Chapel, electricity installed



1945 Interior picture of the chapel

Activities of the Park Lane Congregation
In the village of Lye Waste. =Ley Waste

Ministers
1790 James Scott

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1697 | The Ley House was licensed for worship | 1828 William Bowen |
| 1785 | The Ley Waste Charity school was opened to accommodate 40 children | 1850 William Cochrane |
| 1790 | A room was opened in the Ley Waste for lectures and Sunday evening worship, once a fortnight beginning July 21 st .
Worship every Sunday evening began on November 28 th . | 1866 James Kedwards
1877 Thomas B Broadwick
1880 Thomas Pipe
1891 Isaac Wrigley |
| 1791 | July 14 th decision to purchase land and to build. | 1926 Lot Hall |
| 1792 | July 11 th House acquired for 7 years -- and Sunday School opened again after a lapse of six months. | 1929 John W. Dumble
1938 Philip C. Whiteman |
| 1805 | Purchase of land for building May 6 th . | |
| 1806 | Building opened January 5 th to accommodate 140 persons. | |
| 1807 | A stable erected on the North side of the Chapel | |



Lye Chapel

Journal of the American Chemical Society
Vol. 75, No. 1, pp. 1-10, 1953



Remembrance Sunday November 11th 1932,

Impressive Local services,
Cradley's Tribute –In the Garden of Remembrance
Inspiring Service at Parish Church.

The town memorial service was held at Cradley on Sunday afternoon. And there was a large attendance of the general public and ex-service men to take part in a very inspiring service. As usual the various units assembled in the playground of the Colley Lane Boys Council School. The Police with P.S. Phillips and P.S. Quarrell headed the procession, followed by the Cradley X.L.C.R. Band conducted by Mr J. Robins. Then came Mr P. Smith (president of the local branch of the British Legion who was in charge of the parade) Mr L. Etherington (vice-president) Mr Wesley Cooper (Secretary) Mr Frank Hipkiss C.C. (Chairman of the Friendly Societies and parade committee.) Messrs. R. Green, E.C. Starling and M. V. R. Hodgetts (members of the District Council). The Rev. E.A. Toulouse (Vicar) the Rev. A.C.E. Bennett (curate) The Rev. W.F. Hemmington (Cradley Methodist Church (formerly Wesleyan) The Rev. A.J. Heale (Park Lane Unitarian Church) Mr Albert Hodgetts (Secretary of the Free Church Council) Mr J. Smith and Mr J. Cox (Parade Committee) Cradley ex-service men and Cradley Heath Ex-service men (under Sergt Stanley Noot) Blackheath Ex-service men (under Sergt Major Plant) Rowley Regis Division of St John Ambulance Brigade (under Sergt Reg Fletcher) 1st Cradley Girl Guides (under Miss Woodall) 1st Cradley Troop of Boy Scouts (G.S.M. H. Wyre) Windmill Hill Scouts (G.S. M. E. Holloway) 1st Hales Owen Scouts (troop leader J. Shaw) and Mr J. Jaquiss District Scout Master was also present.

Following the annual custom the Parade marched to the Garden of Remembrance and lined the square, hundreds of spectators being present.

The Clergy and the public representatives having gathered round the Cenotaph, Mr Percy Smith called the Parade to attention and Mr Byng the oldest soldier placed the British Legion Wreath on the monument. Colours were then dipped and Bugler Tilley sounded the 'Last Post' this being followed by two or three seconds of dead silence. Colours were then brought to the 'order' and the Reveille was blown by Bugler Tilley. The Vicar offered prayer for those who suffered and died in the great war, particularly those of that parish and town adding a petition 'to make us all better men and women' and give us 'peace in our time.' The hymn 'O God our help in ages past' was sung by the great assembly to the accompaniment of the band. A Day of Memories. The Rev. Heale read the poem –The call of the dead- and added

"If ye break the faith with us who die
We shall not sleep
Though Poppies grow in 'Flanders Fields'"

He then addressed the assembled crowds.

The Service in the Church

There was a crowded congregation at the service, which followed in the Parish Church. As the people were taking their seats Mr Frank Stevens (the Church organist) played a number of songs and airs which were popular with the soldiers leading up to 'Home sweet Home' which was played as the bearer of the Cross (the symbol of peace) led the Clergy and choir from the Vestry to the Chancel. The service began with that beautiful hymn 'O Valiant Heart' during which the Vicar accepted the various banners and standards of the various units and placed them in the sanctuary. Special prayers having been said by the Vicar, the choir sang a setting of the words 'Jerusalem' after which the Rev. A. C. C. Bennett read the lesson. A band selection 'Asleep in the deep' was well played by the band, and 'Jesu lover of my soul' was sung by the congregation to the tune 'Aberystwyth'.

The Rev. W. E. Hemington gave the address. The Vicar on behalf of the Church wardens and Authorities of the Parish Church offered a hearty welcome to Mr Heale the new minister of Park Lane, Netherend, and also expressed their grateful thanks to him and Mr Hemington for the inspiring words they had had that afternoon. He also thanked Mr Robins and his band, and hoped Mr Stevens and the choir did not require thanks for their part in that wonderful service. The hymn

'Onward Christian Soldiers' and the 'Last Post' and the 'Reveille' and the National Anthem closed the impressive service.

February 25th 1933 Respected Old Inhabitant passes

The death of Mr William Jones of 119 Furlong Lane occurred on Wednesday week after a short illness' Jones who was 90 last month, was exceedingly well known and respected in the parish, and was a familiar figure in all the surrounding districts. He was an iron worker for many years, and during the last 20 years had been living in well earned retirement, with his daughter, Mrs Hackett and her husband, having lost his wife some years ago.

A sturdy Liberal, Mr Jones was a frequent and welcome visitor to the Liberal Club. He had hosts of friends everywhere, and was noted for his geniality and fellowship. A staunch Unitarian, Mr Jones had been connected with Netherend Unitarian Church all his life, and had been baptised there by the Rev. W. Bowen M.A. who married the grand-daughter of the famous Dr Priestley. Mr Jones had a wonderfully retentive memory, had been friendly with such well known people as the Evers family and others formerly connected with Cradley Unitarianism, and was possessed of anecdotal lore. Always cheery and noted for his kind words to and about everybody, he will be sadly missed, especially by the Netherend Congregation.

For many years he was a faithful and indefatigable Sunday School teacher, and almost to the very last he never missed attending his church.

The Funeral took place on Saturday last at the Netherend Churchyard, and was conducted by the Rev. A. J. Heale, the present minister, assisted by the late minister, the Rev. A. H. Shelley, a friend of 40 years standing. A large congregation assembled, members of the committee of the church formed a guard of honour at the church gates.

The deceased was interred in the same grave as his wife.

The organist- Mr J. Griffiths- played suitable music and also accompanied the singing of the deceased favourite hymn 'Forever with the Lord'

The mourners were- Messrs Samuel Jones (son) Josiah Hackett (son-in-law) Eric Hackett (grandson) Horace Jones, Harry Jones, Harry Bowen and Walter Southall (nephews). The bearers were Messrs. Frank-Ernest-Warren- Will Jones and George Bowen and John Bowen nephews. Mr A. Hodgetts and Mr A. Scriven represented the Liberal Club.

Floral tributes were sent by the following- Sam & Gert: Edith & Joe: Marjorie & Eric: Mirelle & Noah: Edith & Bob: C.S & F. Brettell: Harry & Ada Cartwright: Harry, Ada and Edna: Park Lane Committee: Mr & Mrs G.T. Mole: John & Lizzie; Mrs Jarrock and Mrs Roberts: Alice Corbett & family: Mr B Southall & family: Mr Tom Bowen & family: Horace Jones & family: Friends & Neighbours: Cradley Liberal Club; Old friends of Furlong Lane; Edith Brettell. The undertaker was Mr H Jones (Old Hill.)

The Memorial Service

The memorial service for Mr William Jones of Furlong Lane, Colley Gate- held on Sunday evening at the Unitarian Church was conducted by the Rev A. J. Heale. In his address reference was made to the love of children and animals, which characterised Mr Jones throughout his life. As an instance of this it was told how he was accompanied in his morning walk by his household pets, - a collie dog and a black cat. His devoted interest in church affairs was illustrated by his constant attention to the church clock amongst things. His desire to live to see his 90th birthday was also mentioned. Towards Christmas he lost count of the days, but his birthday he kept constantly in remembrance. 'Is it my birthday today'- he asked every morning. When at last January 4th dawned and he was told 'Yes it is your birthday' he exclaimed '90-90 at last - I am 90 today and never a stain upon my character'

The musical portion of the service was rendered by Mr J Griffiths organist of the Netherend Church. There was a large congregation in spite of the inclement weather.

Diary of the War Years 1939-1945 at Netherend Chapel, Cradley

(Prepared by Rev. A. J. Heale.)

1939

The proceedings of the year have been overshadowed by the factor of war during its last four months; in as much as this recording is a summary of the spiritual purposes, interests and activities of the Park Lane Congregation and its institutions the year opened with considerable enthusiasm in every part of the Congregational life, especially among the young people. It closed with these same young people being engaged upon productions of war, classes on 'First Aid', air-raid precautions and local defence measures. The King's broadcast Christmas message summed up the spirit of the year- in its most apt quotation of Miss M. L. Haskins poem -God knows.

'And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year "Give me a light
that I may tread safely into the unknown!" And he replied-

"Go into the darkness and put thine hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to thee better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills, and the breaking of day in the lone east.

So heart be still:

What need our little life

Our human life to know, if God hath comprehension.'

Watch night service 1938-39

The year 1938 closed in the many preparations made for the celebrations of the New Year. The nativity play carried the proceedings well on to 10 o'clock giving time for those assembled to attend the Watch-night service held in the Chapel as in former years. The bell calling to worship was rung by Mrs Heale senior, & Donald Hough & others. The piano was taken across to the chapel, Mr Ernest Attwood officiated. The response of the villagers was good, but the chapel was not as crowded as on the 1938 occasion. It was a merciful providence that hid from us the facts which led us so conclusively to the outbreak of the 2nd World War. As in former years everyone returned to the schoolroom, tea and coffee was served to all assembled and to close the proceedings Auld Lang Syne was sung by all.

New Years Sunday

The day dawned in wintry style, snow fell and it was cold, very wet underfoot. The service in the morning was better attended than might have been expected.

Mr R. Powell, Mr Sydney Gardener, Mr Noel Groves, Mr Arthur Hill, Mr H. Cartwright of Cradley Heath, Mrs W. Brettell of Quarry Bank, Miss Cox of Cradley Heath, Mrs Heale, Mrs Griffiths and a number of children including the Hough boys.

The Sunday was held at 2.15 as usual and the Adult Class at 3.15 Mr Ernest Attwood officiated at the piano and Mr Philip Heale delivered an appropriate address.

The Evening Service was very well attended in spite of the snow.

Easter celebrations, Sunday April 9th.

In accord with previous years the children attending the morning service were each given an Easter Egg, painted and decorated by Mrs Heale.

The Minister after conducting the Sunday school addressed the afternoon class assembled at Two Gates Chapel.

The Anniversary

As per ancient custom was celebrated with enthusiasm on the 2nd Sunday of May the 14th. The occasion was made memorable by the visit of Dr Alfred Hall M.A.D.D. Dr Hall addressed the company—making reference to the long historic record of the Congregation.

The Afternoon service drew together a very large congregation. Mr & Mrs G Evers, various members of the Arthur Webb family, The brothers Sidaway, members of the Hingley family, the Grosvenor family, whose family associations with the chapel is of generations. Alderman H.T. Cox the Mayor of Hales Owen & Mrs Cox, and local people, leaders of the Nonconformist Churches.

Mrs Donald Oliver's Gift.

The year has been marked, with the putting into effect, the generous and beneficent "Memorial Gift" of Mrs Donald Oliver, to her late husband. Alterations and renewals of the Parsonage were placed with the contractors Messrs Mervin and Frank Webb of Quarry Bank and work was begun in February. Central Heating was installed by Messrs Jones & Attwood of Stourbridge, and has been a great boon and comfort to the 'residents'. It is understood that some £50 has also been given to the Treasurer, Mr General Mole, to be used later to commemorate the gift and the beneficiaries in the Chapel. This work undoubtedly could have been done also, but for the restrictions imposed by the war.

The death of Miss Ethel Stevens, daughter of the late Charles & Mrs Mary Stevens of Quarry Bank was a grief to the Congregation. She was a scholar of the Sunday School, became a member of the Choir- and at the time of her decease at 32 years, a qualified nurse on the staff of a Birmingham Hospital.

The death of Mr John Attwood at the age of 68 removed from us a friend whose loyalty and service to the Chapel, Congregation and the schools began at 4 years of age. He rendered years of conscientious service as a caretaker. His death occurred suddenly at Cradley Heath where he was transacting business.

The death also of Mrs Edith Hackett - 63 years- was a great loss- the only daughter of the late William Jones, she was brought to the Chapel in her infancy-a certificated teacher, she assisted in the Sunday-school for a number of years-and was the Treasurers collector of subscriptions to the Chapel for a long period.

Intercession Sunday

The nation was called to a day of prayer on August 27th. Considerable disquiet was felt throughout the whole country and the British Commonwealth Nations and on the Continent by the published news of an alliance between Germany and Russia on Thursday August 24th. This alliance brought to an end the political negotiations of Britain and France for an understanding with Soviet Russia. Further disquiet, having the conditions of a political crisis was experienced by the breakdown of Germany-Polish dispute on the city of Danzig and its seafront. Fears of an imminent outbreak of War general among the populace.

Mrs Heale travelled to Walsall and conducted an Intercession service there. The Minister by request visited the Cradley Forge Brotherhood service at 3 pm and Intercession was engaged in.

Sunday September 3rd

The announcement by radio that the Premier Mr Neville Chamberlain would broadcast to the Nation at 11.15 am on Sept 3rd occasioned the Minister to suggest immediately on opening the service, that after prayer had been offered the Congregation should adjourn to the Parsonage sitting room to hear the broadcast. Prayer was offered and the Lords Prayer repeated together. The Minister then left the chancel and in orderly procession the Congregation passed from the Chapel to the Parsonage.

Mr James Fieldhouse-Burton-on-Trent, Mr Noel Groves, Mr W. Worton, Mrs Worton, Mrs Pearshouse, Mrs Lydia Heale, Miss Miriam Tallis followed by 20 children.

Mr H Cartwright of Cradley Heath and Mr J Griffiths organist, refused the invitation and after a short time returned to their homes.

After the Broadcast which necessarily becomes historic- in as much as it was a declaration of War with Germany, silence was observed-everyone present, even the smallest child was conscious that it was a time of calamity, of anxiety and fearsomeness. The Minister broke the tension of the silence with prayer, kneeling among the people, the children clustered round him, Mrs Heale and the adults present. Rising the Minister went to the piano and all joined in singing the

familiar and customary hymn for times of distress and evil tidings, O God our help in ages past. The Benediction concluded the proceedings.

The adults remaining to partake of a refreshing cup of tea prepared by Mrs L Pearshouse.

Mr R Powell was recalled to the Brick-works just before the Service, by request of the Borough Police [Air Raid Precautions.]

The Evening Service was curtailed to half an hour, the Sunday school was conducted as usual. The Adult Class was addressed by Mr Auden of Two Gates, who made no reference to the crisis at all- probably it was intentionally so in compassion for the men who had come together scarcely knowing what personal consequences might be upon them.

Mrs Lydia Heale travelled to Warwick to conduct evening services there, by arrangement and prospective of travel difficulties the Minister met her at Mr Frank Shaw's home Windmill Hill-the difficulties of travel were already beginning, she did not arrive until 11 o'clock pm.

The Sunday Morning scholars were to have an outing on the following day August 4th they met at the Parsonage. After consultation with the Minister & Mrs Heale, the Air Raid Wardens-Mr Leonard Pettis, Mr Plant-another- were called and work was begun, the Parsonage cellar was prepared as an air raid shelter, and a dugout was enthusiastically begun under the Sunday school. Snap shots were taken. The work continued for a week.

Because of lighting restrictions the service on Sunday September 10th was held at 3.30pm instead of 6.30.

The Netherend day-school was closed from the Declaration of War.

Armistice Sunday

Was observed on Sunday November 12th. The chapel table and font were as per custom, adorned with the gifts of flowers from the villagers-and the memorial "Scraps of Paper" of the First War- framed with laurel leaves and large red poppies- made by Mrs Heale. The morning service was attended by,

Mr James Fieldhouse of Newcastle	Mrs Heale
Mr Harry Cartwright Cradley Heath	Mrs Pearshouse
Mr R Powell Sec of the Chapel	Mrs Powell
Mr Bob Powell jun	Miss Miriam Tallis
Mr Cedric Parsons	Miss – Tallis
Mr Tom Edwards	20 to 25 boys and girls

And Mr Griffiths the organist.

The afternoon service at 3'oclock was maintained by

Mr&Mrs Sidney Gardener	Mrs W Tallis
Mr & Mrs William Hill	Mrs Deakin
Mr Ernest Attwood	Mrs Evans
Mr George Ray	Mrs Robinson
Mr Ewart Ray	Mrs G M Mole
Mr & Mrs Edwards	Miss Cartwright
	Miss Kate Stanford
	Miss Ivy Harris
	Miss Marjory Smith

The Misses Ethel, Laura & Doris Ray and a number of children.

The Minister conducted the service.

A united Armistice Service was held at the St Peters Church at 4 o'clock; the minister with other Nonconformist ministers took part.

The Pargeter Trust

Quarterly Meetings attended by the Minister. The Baldwin Refugee Meetings called by his Worship the Mayor were attended.

Assistance rendered to other Nonconformist Churches-addresses given-

Jan 3 rd	The Temperance Society-BWTS-request of Mrs Lawley
Jan 15 th	Zion Chapel, HalesOwen
Feb 24 th	Cradley Heath Woman's Day of Prayer
Feb 15 th	Trinity Methodist Church
March 2 nd	Cradley Forge " "
March 5 th	Hodge Hill " "
March 19 th	The Bethel, Lye
March 19 th	Quarry Bank Congregational Brotherhood.
March 23 rd	Trinity Church Cradley
April 9 th	Two Gates Mission.
April 16 th	Colley Gate Methodist Church
May 1 st	The Baptist Church Cradley
May 18 th	Cradley Forge Methodist Church
June 5 th	Christ Church Cradley Heath
June 13 th	Colley Gate Methodist Church
June 14 th	British Women's Temperance Society
June 22 nd	Dudley Wood Methodist Church
June 24 th	Hasbury Women's meeting
July 2 nd	Hales Owen Baptist Church
July 16 th	The Bethel Mission Lye
August 10 th	Belle Vale Mission
Aug 27 th	Cradley Forge Methodist Church
Nov 26 th	Christ Church Cradley Heath
Dec 5 th	Colley Gate Methodist Church
Dec 13 th	Hayes Lane Methodist Church

The Cradley Free Church Council

Meetings of the Council and in association with the council and its promotions were attended by the Minister on Jan 13th, March 1st, Feb 13th, March 17th, April 21st, June 9th, Sept 8th.

The Cradley Schools Educational Board.

The Minister's appointment to the Board of Managers being a County Council Appointment-and by virtue of service, the Minister represented the Board on the occasion of the appointment of the Head-Master of the Senior school-visited the Modern school at Old Hill and responded to the calls of the clerk when meetings were summoned.

Events of National and local interest.

April 27 th	Conscription was introduced
April 29 th	Gas Masks were distributed to householders.
April 30 th	Mr Wesley Cooper consulted about local air-raid precautions
May 1 st	Air-raid precautions meeting held at the Baptist Church Cradley
May 6 th	A.R.P. Wardens take up station at the Netherend day school
May 23 rd	The Minister attends the Conscientious Objectors Meeting held at the Priory Rooms.
Aug 24 th	Russo. Germany pact announced
Sept 3 rd	Premier's announcement of War- the Kings Speech
Sept 4 th	Air-raid shelters begun at the Parsonage.
Sept 8 th	The minister advised to see a specialist, ordered a complete change and rest, does not return until Nov.2 nd .

The year 1939 closed with four months of War. The decision of the chapel committee not to black-out the chapel necessitated the holding of an afternoon service at 3 o'clock or 3 15 pm this arrangement conformed also with decision of the Cradley Free Church Council to request that Worship should be held in daylight and the dangers of Black-out avoided as far as possible. The village service held in the schools has been continued during the winter months with considerable satisfaction, members of the usual Congregation, of the Y.P.L., and scholars of the Sunday School attending. Frequently while the service was in progress, gunfire was heard and the drone of planes overhead occasioned some uneasiness, but the service was not abandoned. As the year lengthened and the raids became more intense, rather naturally the increasing tensions and varied shift hours of work had their effect upon the attendance of worship.

During the year from the evacuation of Dunkirk on May 26th, the Parsonage itself became a harbour of refuge for the village folk and their children, as soon as the sirens wailed out 'alert', the parsonage cellar and ground floor quickly filled with people, ready with clothing, to spend the night, many did, others returned to their homes when the 'all clear' was heard. The floor mats and rugs were collected from the various rooms and a double bed provided for additional comfort in the cellar. On occasions the number finding shelter there was over 40. Boys under the supervision of the 1st Official Wardens, Messrs Plant and Pettis having cleared a large space under the school building in September 1939 now fitted it with boards, but it was not used excepting by boys. Accepting responsibility towards the villagers for A.R.P. the Minister was acknowledged as the Head Warden of the A.3 post, with its headquarters at the Old Mogul Inn occupied officially on September 27th. Men and women were voluntarily enrolled as Wardens—courses of lectures were given on the duties of Wardens by the Borough Organiser Mr Hayton- the Police Superintendent, the Cradley Head Warden Mr Wesley Cooper, and others. 1st Aid practices were organised. A messenger service of youths over the age of 16 years instituted-The esprit-des- coeur was at all times cooperative and of good fellowship, frequently necessitating the Wardens on duty to be at their posts until 2,3,4, o'clock am. As the year drew towards its close the vigilance of the Wardens was taxed more and more by raids on the Midland area. Land-mine explosives dropped in Quarry Bank on Dec 20th, which providentially did no destruction as they descended by parachute and were rendered harmless by under-shoring by the gallantry of Mr Frank Webb of Quarry Bank, and dismantled by Marines later. So with something akin to a grim resolution to meet day by day occurrences as they came, the villagers have found 'grace sufficient for all their needs.' As the year 1941 opens before them the Kings' message on Christmas Day 1939 prophesied all this courage and resolution.

The Anniversary was commemorated as usual on the second Sunday of May, May 12th. The gathering of members of families now widely scattered and too distant to attend the services and worship of the chapel, was not noticeably effected by the difficulties of travel. The chapel was comfortably filled for the two services.

Hospital Sunday

By request of the Cradley Free Church Council June 23rd & 24th were regarded as Corbett Hospital Gift Days. The scholars of the various Sunday-schools were requested to bring gifts of eggs and fruit to their respective schools on Sunday afternoon June 23rd and to devote the school collection to the Hospital, and to attend a demonstration of First Aid, bringing their gifts to High Town Mission on the evening of Monday June 24th. Gifts were received from the scholars on Sunday morning and afternoon here and were displayed to the Evening congregation. On the day following, the Minister & Mrs Heale accompanied the children to High Town. The gifts were received by representatives of the Hospital- each school contributing its share. The demonstration of 'First Aid' given by Ambulance Workers, members of the Hospital staff, was greatly appreciated.

Scout of Youth Intercession Sunday

In response with the Archbishop of Canterbury's appeal for a Children's day of prayer- August 11th was set aside, and the evening service dedicated especially to this purpose.

Introduction - scout John Jones
 1st lesson - scout Tom Edwards
 2nd lesson - scout Jack Hill
 Prayers - scout Reginald Hatton
 - cub Donald Hatton
 - cub Harry Hall

All members of the Sunday School

A number of parents and villagers supported the scholars in this their first attempt to take the lead in an act of congregation worship.

Civic Sunday November 10th and Remembrance Service November 17th.

As in previous years, a United 'Remembrance' Ex-Servicemen's Parade and service was held at the St Peters Church at 3.45pm. The Commemoration was a week later than usual in Cradley-because of the Mayor at the Civic Service at Hales Owen Church on November 9th. At Alderman Walter Hodgetts' request, the Minister attended the Civic Service in his honour and joined the Mayoral procession into the church on November 10th. The new Mayor, Alderman Hodgetts, being a Cradley man- Cradley was largely represented on this occasion. A week later the Hales Owen Borough Council was well represented at Cradley for the Ex-Serviceman's Parade and the Remembrance Service.

The Service was conducted by the Vicar; The Rev. C. Gilwhite M.A. delivered the Sermon- The Minister took part in the opening prayers.

During the Service an 'alert' was sounded- The centre of the City of Coventry with its Cathedral Church had been reduced to ruins the previous Friday night.

The Remembrance was observed at the Chapel (Netherend) both Morning and Afternoon. The evening service in the Schoolroom was conducted by the Minister, the rooms arranged with scarlet poppies made by Mrs Heale. About 20 villagers were present and several children. The proceedings were disturbed by heavy gunfire.

News reached the village that Mrs Davis, wife of a former caretaker of the chapel had been killed at Coventry, and the new Unitarian Chapel there had been badly damaged.

The Christmas Festival

Was held on Sunday Dec. 22nd -By reason of the grave anxieties of the previous two days, occasioned by the descent of two land-mines in the High Street, Quarry Bank, the evacuation of many of the inhabitants, and an all night 'alert' Saturday-Sunday-when Manchester suffered a severe raid. Most people were extremely tired. There were only a few children, Mrs Heale and the organist at the Morning Service. 16 to 20 in the afternoon. At night in the schoolroom, decorated for the Festival and a Christmas tree lighted-25 or so adults gathered and 10 children. A Carol was sung by the children, Miss Doris Ray read the lesson, the Minister delivered a Christmastide message at each service. The continuous drone of planes and heavy gunfire was very disturbing to the Evening Service. The 'alert' sounded about 3.45 and remained operative until dawn next morning. A United Free Church Christmas Service was held at the Baptist Church Cradley on Christmas Day.

Assistance to other Churches

March 10 th	Colley Gate Methodist Church
June 2 nd	Brotherhood Brierley Hill
June 30 th	Baptist Church Hales Owen
July 14 th	Cradley Forge Adult class
July 28 th	Two Gates Adult Class
October 21 st	Christ Church, Cradley Heath
November 28 th	Trinity Church Cradley.

Education

The Board of managers was held at the Colley Lane junior school as called by the clerk Mr Pryse. And the District Attendance Committee also. The Minister attended these meetings, a County Representative appointment.

The Cradley Free Church Council

The Council has met regularly every 3rd Friday of the month or as called. The Minister, Mr R Powell & Mr W Hill were appointed representatives of the Chapel. Sometime early in the year Mr Edwards Secretary of the Council and also of the Baptist Church Cradley, announced with regret his inability to continue the responsibilities as Secretary for the Council because of the prolonged illness of the Rev Knox Wylie, Minister of the Baptist Church. The Council made no appointment-later the Minister, The Rev A.J.Heale wrote a letter to the acting president-Rev. C.T. Gilwhite (the Rev Knox Wylie before his illness was the President of the Council.) offering his services – acknowledging that the council might not feel free to discuss the offer in his presence, for theological reasons, he would not attend the next meeting .The Rev &Mrs Gilwhite called at the Parsonage on April 29th thanked the Minister for his offer and he was invited to the office at the following meeting. The acceptance and appointment was confirmed on May 17th and the Minister sent out the notices calling the council for July 19th. A very successful Hospital gift-day was organised during the week-end of June 23&24. An attempt was made to cooperate with the Hales Owen Free Church Council, but the latter had almost ceased to function. Representation was sought by the council for recognition of the Youth Organisation Committee, recently bought into operation by Mr Johnson Ball – the Principal of the Technical School. The Minister was appointed. The Council cooperated with the Vicar of Cradley for the Remembrance Day service-The Rev Gilwhite delivered the address. The Minister led the 1st Prayers of the service. The United service was held on Christmas Day. This drawing together of all the Free Christian Churches-including the Unitarians, should be a happy augury for the future of Nonconformity in the Borough, it is early yet to prophecy, it has withstood no critical tests of any kind.

The A.R.P.

The ministers close and intimate association with the Society of Friends in his youth at Plymouth, and later at Selly Oak and Kingsmead, when he became a member of the Society naturally led him to adopt the Conscientious Objectors point of view in the First World War. These views have been retained in the Second World War to the full knowledge of the Congregation. The increasing and compelling inescapable responsibilities of moral & spiritual leadership in the village, and its expression in practical forms for the safety and well being of the community became more and more urgent as the war on the Continent raced towards the crisis in the German Invasion of Holland and Belgium, and the political crisis here in this country resulting in the resignation of Mr Neville Chamberlain as Premier and Mr Winston Churchill's appointment to that office. The call for voluntary Air-Raid Wardens resulted in the appointment of three men Messrs, Plant, Pettis and another for Netherend with headquarters at the day-school. Rover Scouts assisted them to keep watch during the night. It was clear however that these preliminary Air-raid precautions needed organisation. The Minister's overtures about the matter in May bought the response from the Cradley Head Warden, Mr Wesley Cooper-the job wants doing, I've been waiting for you, here's you're A R P badge, get down to it.

The National Day of Prayer May 26th seemed to leave the Minister no option-and the decision was taken having in mind His Majesty's Speech-Let us with one heart and spirit humbly but confidently commit our cause to God and ask his aid that we may valiantly defend the right as it is given to us to see it. -During that weekend – what has been termed the Miracle of Dunkirk happened and thousands of our men were bought back safely, from what seemed utter destruction, by a multitude of little ships of all descriptions, and gallantry of the very small company of air-men –Never did so many owe so much to so few-

A demonstration of hand pumps was held in the village on June 18th .The Cradley Head Warden addressed a meeting in the Netherend Sunday-school on June 25th and wardens were enrolled. Air-raid warning given on June 26th provision of the first air-raid shelter in the village was attempted-the wardens already mentioned assisted by senior boys of the village began digging out under the Sunday-schoolroom.

June 28th Air-raid warning.

July 1st 1st Air-raid warning in daylight

- July 10th Alderman Walter Hodgetts, The Mayor called a meeting for the Soldiers Comforts Fund-Fund extended to all men and women of the Borough in the Forces.
- July 22nd The Minister was officially appointed Head Warden of the A3 district of Cradley. District Organiser A R P Hayton began a course of lectures at Netherend on Home Defence, and First Aid classes were begun on July 29th – Superintendent Williams the instructor.
- July 25th An Air-raid warning bought several Mothers with their children asking that the shelter under the schoolroom might be used. The Minister refused permission, saying that it was too damp and in no way suitable for a prolonged stay. Shelter was offered in the Parsonage cellar. This was accepted, the cellar cleared and made fairly comfortable with rugs etc of the Parsonage. A warden was left in charge. Next day electric light was connected and from then onward, children and adults to as many as 40 & 50 gathered there and remained whenever the ‘alarm’ was heard.
- July 26th A Warden’s Social Service Committee was formed.
- August The Parsonage cellar was in use almost continually-the Minister and Post Warden Smith watched the raid and the gunfire from the hills at Rowley Regis from the top of Homer Hill on August 13th & 25th. Bombs thought to have passed over Netherend fell in Quarry Bank Park.
- August 25th & 26th Second scare of bombs said to have fallen in the fields behind Mogul Lane, left of the village, inhabitants removed from houses, watch kept all night, search made on the morning of the 26th nothing found, thought to have been located at Amblecote.
- Sept. 12th Warden’s post transferred from the day school to the Old Mogul Inn –fully instituted on Sept. 27th
- Sept. 12th Raid on London Buckingham Palace damaged.
The devastating raids on London were followed by repeated raids on Birmingham and the Midlands during October and November.
- November 14th, 15th & 16th The centre of Coventry was destroyed –the raid continued for three nights. News was brought into the village that Mrs Davis wife of a recent caretaker of the chapel had been killed in the house of friends who also perished.
-The Minister accompanied Mr Davis & Mrs Ward (aunt) to Coventry on Monday 18th Officials of the City received them sympathetically, the rubble where the victims had sought shelter was still burning. On the way on the outskirts of the city, the damaged new Unitarian Chapel was seen.
- Nov. 19th-22nd The disastrous raids on Birmingham occurred. Lord ‘Haw-Haw’ broadcast that 500 Planes had taken part.
- Dec 11th Further raids on Birmingham, the Moseley in which Mr & Mrs Lewis Lloyd and their daughter and other friends of the Moseley Unitarian Congregation were killed. The village was shaken by gunfire.
- Dec 20th Two landmines descended by parachute, in the High Street, Quarry Bank. The people requested to leave their houses many came to Cradley, the Warden’s Post was crowded with people who refused to leave, the wardens were greatly hampered in their work, the day-school was opened as a ‘Rest-Centre’ for the first time. Villagers crowded into the Parsonage many staying all night-gradually and after much persuasion from the Minister the people at the Warden’s Post were passed on to Colley Lane ‘rest centre’.
One mine hit the corner of a clubhouse, the parachute became entangled in the roof, and the mine stayed suspended in one of the rooms. Mr Frank Webb with great gallantry shored it up with wooden stays, it was dismantled next day by a company of Royal Marines. The second descended in soft earth behind the Cinema, and did no

damage-the people were not allowed to return to their homes till about 3 o'clock on the 21st. The mines were removed at 11am on Sunday morning the 22nd.

The alert was sounded again before the afternoon service-and again heavy gun fire occurred during the evening service. The Congregation remained to sing hymns until about 9pm. Adults and children were already in the Parsonage cellar, tea was served every night the cellar was occupied.

Dec.27th

The village was greatly disturbed by the passage of aeroplanes and gun fire. Later we heard the attack was made on Manchester. During the disaster Mr Walker, brother of Mrs May Hickman, and brother-in-law of Mrs G Mole behaved with such gallantry and heroism that he was decorated by His Majesty the King.

Cross St Chapel, the home of Nonconformity in Manchester and the centre of our Unitarian faith there was destroyed.

At all times the cooperation and discharge of duties was faithfully fulfilled by the Wardens. Those men and women who volunteered for this service at the beginning continued right through to the end of the year, frequently coming straight from work to Post duty and remaining on duty until 3am in the morning.

The list of Wardens enrolled is-

Park Lane	Mr J Timmins	Mrs Hatton
	Mr C Basterfield	Miss D Harbach
	Mr F Stonebridge	Mrs M Hough
	Mr L Redfern	Mrs Perks
	Mr V Cooke	
	Mr B Johnson	Miss ? Harris
	Mr A Hough	
The Square	Mr Storrs	Mrs Storrs
	The Rev A J Heale	Mrs Lydia Heale
	Mr W Worton	Miss Ida Cross
	Mr B Harris	Mrs W Worton
	Mr J Felton	
	Mr J Buffery	
Mogul Lane	Mr H Wall	Mrs A Cox
	Mr B Plant	Mrs Colley
Maypole Hill		Mrs Smith
		Mrs Prosser
	Mr Bucknall	Mr Pearson
	Mr Reginald Southall (Park Lane)	
	Mr David Smith	Post Warden
	Mr L Pettis	Mr W Davis } Post Wardens
	Mr Plant	
Messengers	Mr W Roberts	
	Mr D Roberts	
	Mr A Jones	
	Mr R Jones	
	Mr E Turley	
	Mr F Emery	
	Mr L Smith	
The Messenger Service was increased later-		
	John Jones	Frank Smith
	Reginald Hatton	Dennis Edwards
	Joe Harper	
	Dennis Cox	

Sleeping bunks were provided for the Messingers, two were required to remain with the Post Wardens each night-Some light refreshment was provided for the Wardens & Messengers when on duty- later a small payment was made and the refreshments withdrawn.

The A.1. Headquarters Cradley was at Foredraft St, Colley Gate.

The A.2. Headquarters at the Baptist Schoolrooms, Cradley

The A.3. Headquarters at the Old Mogul Inn, Netherend.

The ladies were required to sign the register of duty as per rota, but not required to remain at the Post- unless there was a compelling necessity.

A register of every household in the A.3. District was compiled -The Minister and the Post Warden Mr D. Smith visited every house to take particulars.

Personal and other events

March 13th The war with Finland declared to be at an end.

April 21st The Lye Chapel Anniversary, visit of the Rev. E. E. Wrigley

April 30th The Minister was called to Stourbridge and remained there until about 8.30pm. The darkness of the 'Black out' was so dense, that all idea of direction was lost as soon as a street had to be crossed, no vehicular traffic was possible. Reaching Birmingham Rd after considerable difficulty, the way to Stambermill was accomplished by keeping close to the walls of the houses and hedgerows, at the open gateway of works there, many falls were experienced among the materials there, before the roadway was found again. At Lye, hailed by an unseen wayfarer an exchange of shouts as to whereabouts was abruptly ended by the Minister falling over the man already lying on the pavement, raising him to his feet they went a few steps arm in arm and both fell off the curb." I've travelled this way day by day from work 30 years, if anybody had told me I'd lose myself-I'd have said impossible-but I don't know where we are now." At the Cinema and again at Pump St long delays were experienced before headway was made with certainty. At Hayes Lane he left the Minister- before the rest of the way home was accomplished many falls and walking into obstacles, lampposts, the corners of houses, protruding doorsteps, etc were experienced. His face and hands cut, trousers and boots torn and covered with mud, hat lost, the Minister reached the Parsonage about 12.30. The Blackest night ever experienced in my life.

May 18th Dr & Mrs Morbt here-The Steiner Agricultural Specialist at Grove House Clent. The first of many visits, -they are German refugees fled Nazi oppression, Mrs Morbt addressed the Women's Social Hour on several occasions; later Dr&Mrs Morbt undertake agricultural production for the government in Cambridgeshire and Lincoln.

June 16th France seeks Armistice

June 26th Mrs Nellie Norris here from Southend-Family bombed out.

July 16th Noel Harris called to forces. Nephew of the secretary Mr R Powell, member of Y P L, Sister Ivy had previously said 'If my brothers have to go into the army, I'll never go to church again.' She severed her connection with the Y PL, the Sunday school of which she was a teacher, and the chapel congregation.

July 14th A shaft of brilliant light seen in the sky, fashioned as a cross by a rift in the clouds; seen by several villagers from the Village Square-the Minister's attention called to it as he returned from the Adult Class at Cradley Forge. Entering the Parsonage and going into the garden finds Mr & Mrs Alfred Hough their two sons, Mr&Mrs W Worton and Mrs Heale watching the phenomena.

July 31st Philip Heale volunteers for Military service through the University of Oxford Recruiting Board.

- August 4th Women Villagers request use of shelter and the schoolrooms for their children during Air-raids-Minister offers use of Parsonage cellar-offer is accepted-as long as the 'alert' is operative.
- August 12th Westwood undertakes the caretaking of the Chapel.
- August 13th Air raid attack on Birmingham area-Cellar of Parsonage now in frequent use-almost nightly.
Scare of air-raid by villagers-bomb thought to have dropped in?
- October 12th Philip Heale returns to Oxford and says farewell to the Principal and staff.
- October 17th Philip Heale responds to the 'call-up' of the forces-Depot OSSETT YORKS.
- November 6th Mrs Pearshouse-the Parsonage Housekeeper, engaged in washing got her fingers & arm caught in the electric mangle and is very badly hurt. Her family are notified, doctor in attendance. Although the wound healed her arm and hand is not expected to recover to full use again.
- July 28th The County Express reports the death of Capt. Brian Evers-son of Mr&Mrs Percy Evers, Secretary of the Chapel Trustees- in a German Concentration camp. (This was afterwards proven to be a false report. A Memorial service was conducted at Broome Church, Stourbridge.Mr Brian returned home and is now the head of the firm Messrs.Harward&Evers [1947])
- September 8th 1st letter received from Reginald Stamford-member of the YPL-Prisoner of War.

1941

The year of 1940 had been one of increasing anxiety occasioned by the unstayed advance of the invading forces of Germany west-ward across Europe. Anxieties which were intensified by the catastrophic and disastrous air-attacks upon this country. The gravity of the whole position was brought home to the inhabitants of the district in particular as the year was coming to its close. The City of Birmingham was sadly devastated on the night of Oct 26th -27th; the City of Coventry on November 16th-17th; and two land-mines descended in High St, Quarry Bank, just across the Stour on Saturday Dec 21st mercifully there was no explosion. Thus the year 1940 came to an end, and 1941 began with the wail of the sirens bringing us all to the 'alert' night after night, more particularly during the week-ends. The tension and anxiety was not much lessened in the early months of the year, yet a marked resolution characterised the people, and as the year advanced although it was well known that we were fighting alone, the issue never seemed to be really doubted. Yugo-Slavia was invaded on April 6th and Greece on April 27th and Birmingham suffered its severest air-raid on March 11th 12th 13th, Clydeside March 13th & 14th and Coventry and Birmingham on April 9th; Wolverhampton on July 8th and Dudley on August 12th.

The news that Japan had ravaged Pearl Harbour on Dec 7th whilst her diplomats were still negotiating at Washington occasioned something in the nature of a relief, "America will surely come in now" was heard on every hand. The confirmation came on Dec 11th America had entered the war- we no longer fought alone. Resolution noticeably quickened among all the inhabitants, "now for it"-Thus the year ended with hope renewed, although it is realised also that the end is by no means in sight yet.

The Watch Night Service was announced and the schoolroom prepared, the Minister and Mrs Heale were the only persons in attendance, the service was carried through as arranged. The Easter Celebrations fell late this year, April 13th. For those who are accustomed to observe the commemorative solemn rituals of the church during Passion week, the war news must have provided an added stimulus for prayer. Germany declared war on Yugo-Slavia on Sunday April 6th and the British Forces entered Abbis Ababa on Tuesday and Wednesday, demonstrations of Fire-fighting were attended by Wardens of the whole Borough at Hales Owen, and on Wednesday and Thursday from dusk onwards destructive raids were experienced in Birmingham and Coventry in which personal friends of the Parsonage lost their homes. These raids were watched from Homer Hill by the Minister, the awe inspiring spectacle of the flame issuing from the great guns on the hills of Rowley Regis and the roar of the explosions brought the realities of the war and its deathly

seriousness right close home to the whole populace of the neighbourhood. Yet in the midst of it all for those of us associated with the Chapel, Saturday provided the occasion for the decoration of the chapel for the Easter Festival with beautiful flowers, the gift of Mrs Clara Attwood, in preparation for the marriage of her granddaughter, Olive Bache on Easter Monday. On Easter Day also thanksgiving was made for the birth of Robert Tonks, infant son of Bertram and Ethel Tonks, the christening ceremony was attended by members of the Ray family and a number of villagers.

The Anniversary Celebrations. As in accord with the Ancient tradition the Anniversary Commemorations were held on the second Sunday of May –May 11th. The Rev H.J. Rossington of the Church of the Messiah officiated at both services. Taking into account the effects the war news would have upon the people- that during the air-raids on London on May 9th Friday-Westminster, the Abbey, rumours of Buckingham Palace, all being severely damaged-Mr Rossington's sermons stimulated the minds and hearts of the congregation to take courage, and to endure with fortitude, patience, trust and faith. The Mayor & Mayoress, Alderman & Mrs Walter Hodgetts attended the afternoon service-also Ernie Stevens Esq.; and many representatives of the families long associated with the Chapel, Hingleys, Sidaways, Brettells, Grosvenor, Mr Stanley Griffiths, Mr&Mrs W Robinson, Alderman H J Cox, The Head Warden Mr Wesley Cooper, together with a large number of the local inhabitance.

The children of the Sunday school rendered two hymns, as is the custom on this occasion. The children using the old "Charity school" seats in the gallery.

The Rev H J Rossington had difficulty in getting back to Birmingham rumour says he was obliged to walk the greater part of the way home.

The Armistice & Remembrance Services were held on Nov.9th The Font being displayed with scarlet poppies as usual. At the two services in the Chapel the Minister officiated and addresses were given in accord with the memorial occasion. The congregations were not large.

At 3.45 the customary Ex-servicemen's parade was held at Colley Gate, and the customary service at St Peter's Church. The evening village service was held in the schoolroom.

Visit of the Rev A H Shelley Minister Emeritus November 21st.

In consequence of the request by the district Minister Rev H Warnock, the Minister of the Chapel went to Warwick to assist the congregation there. The Rev. A H Shelley officiated at the afternoon service here. The congregation greatly appreciated this courtesy, Mr Shelley's eyesight although worsened, did not hinder him delivering a sermon with his customary vigour & forthrightness.

The Christmas Festival was commemorated in the Chapel on Sunday December 21st. Appropriate sermons were delivered by the Minister at the three services held during the day. The evening service in the schoolrooms was well attended and after the benediction all remained to sing carols.

On Christmas Day a united services was held at 11'o clock in the Colley Gate Methodist Church. The Rev Knox Wylie and the Rev A J Heale assisted with the procedures of the service. The service was conducted by the Cradley Free Church Council President Mr Frank Bloomer. -The Sermon delivered by the Rev. W Sykes Cradley Trinity Methodist Church.

The Sunday school cooperated with the Free Church Council in the Cradley Collection for Corbett Hospital on Sunday 20th July & also on Monday 21st when the gifts of all the Cradley Sunday schools were presented to Hospital officials at High Town. The total gifts were £15 3. 0. Netherend's contribution £2.15.0.

As secretary of the Cradley Free Church Council, the Minister promoted the formation of a Cradley Free Church Youth Club, which was sponsored by the Free Church Council. Mr Frank Blackwell of Colley Gate Methodist and Miss of High Town were appointed representatives of the Youth clubs on the F C Council. As the autumn & winter months passed a large number of young people resident in the village attended the League meeting. The Minister, Mrs Heale and Miss Ida Cross being responsible. Representatives of the League attended a Youth Conference held at West Bromwich on September 27th and a 1st Cinema show was given in the schoolroom on Dec.20th.

The resolution of the Cradley Free Church Council to form and exercise responsibilities towards a Cradley Youth club was accepted on Sept 18th The Hales Owen Youth Committee was held on the same date.

The Pargeter Trust held its quarterly meetings and had lunch at the customary times March, June, September and December. The Minister attended.

Services rendered to other Churches by the Minister & Mrs Heale

Trinity Methodist Church	Jan 9 th	Oct 29 th
Cradley Forge	Jan 30 th	June 16 th
Christ Church	April 28 th	Garden Party here July 7 th .
Brierley Hill Brotherhood	June 8 th	
Hayes Lane	Aug 27 th	Oct 19 th Dec 15 th
A R P Old Hill	Aug 31 st	
Granville St B'ham	Sept 8 th	
Christ Church	Oct 20 th	Dec 13 th .
New St Quarry Bank	November 11 th	
Colley Gate Methodist	Dec 9 th	
United Free Church Service Cradley	Dec 25 th .	

Cradley Free Church Council

The Minister as secretary called the council together on the following dates for monthly business meetings – Jan 10th Feb 7th The Annual Meeting on February 17th March 28th May 23rd June 13th July 11th Sept 12th Oct 12th Nov 14th Dec 13th The Christmas day United service on Dec 25th.

The meeting on Dec 13th was held in the Parsonage sitting room and addressed by the Rev. Langley Secretary of the Free Church Council Federation Midland area.

Day-schools United service By the invitation of Mr E H Mansk ? The Minister attended the Annual Grammar school service held in the Parish Church Hales Owen. The Rev C T Gilwhite President of the Cradley Free Church Council & the Rev R Yaxley Vicar of Cradley were also present. The minister accompanied the Rev Gilwhite on the homeward bus and suggested it might be a demonstration of religious unity and cooperation before the rising generation, if a united service of all the day schools of Cradley could be arranged, alighting from the bus the Rev Yaxley was interviewed and agreed with the project. The Heads of the Colley Lane schools were accordingly interviewed and a meeting to further the matter was arranged for Wed. June 18th; successive meetings were held and the demonstration and act of worship arranged to take place on Thursday July 24th.

Two services were conducted-one for the seniors & junior schools the second for the infants or primary schools.

Senior & Junior scholars assembled by their teachers preceded by the Head Teachers marched to the St Peter's church-the principals, Mr G Mitchell, Mr Shakespeare, Mr Raybould attended and were met by the Rev R Yaxley, the Rev C T Gilwhite, the Rev Davies & the Rev A J Heale. The Rev Davies officiated at the organ.

An Annual Service of this kind might have been a powerful influence in drawing all the Cradley Churches together, a united act of worship once a year: but the second service held on July 23rd 1942 was followed by a proposition that the services should be held quarterly and later monthly, this was objected to by the minister and a breach in the fellowship of the Cradley Ministers followed, resulting in the Ministers dismissal from the Free Church Council.

Cradley Nursing Association

The affairs of the Association have been successful maintained by Mr R Green President and 'founder' and Mr Griffiths Secretary of Furlong Lane; and the work conducted by Nurse Radcliffe and Nurse Downen? Indication of Nurse Radcliffe's desire to resign her post was quickened by the visit of Nurse Manton from Exeter on May 13th Confirmation was given at a meeting called at Colley Gate House on August 22nd Nurse Radcliffe resigned on Aug 26th and the

secretary on Sept 16th. Nurse Manton was appointed in the place of Nurse Radcliffe. Some 4 months previously Mr R Green called at the Parsonage and requested the Minister to relieve him of the Presidency – this was followed by the request of Mrs Green also – Mr Green by doctors orders relinquished all his public offices.

On Sept. 26th The Minister in the chair – a meeting was held at Colley Gate House respecting the appointment of a new secretary and on November 24th, the Minister as Chairman announced and introduced Mrs McCarthy as the new secretary – as the wife of Dr Noel McCarthy-Colley Gate, Mrs McCarthy is well known to all, and the appointment heartily approved. The appointment of a representative Committee of local folk too was commended. The invitations were accepted by Dec 17th. Mrs Daykin junr, Mrs Blackwell junr, Mrs M Hickman, Mrs Mole, Mrs Dunn, Mrs Green, Mrs Heale, Mrs Yaxley, Mrs Letty Ray, Mrs Bache, and the voluntary collectors. Mr Richard Green was appointed President, The Rev A J Heale Chairman, Mrs McCarthy Secretary & Treasurer, other members of the Committee were the Rev Yaxley, Dr J Sheddon, Dr McCarthy, Mr Albert Hodgetts. The Nurses Miss Downen and Miss Manton became resident at a house in Beecher St Colley Gate.

Air Raid Precautions During the winter months of 1940, the training of Wardens at the A3 Post was carried forward with considerable enthusiasm on the part of all. Exercises in fire-fighting, lectures on first-aid, the maintenance of the rota of Warden night – duty, the frequency of the siren ‘alert’ put a heavy strain upon the villagers, men and women, who voluntarily enrolled for Warden duties. By the beginning of the year it was clear that many of the enemy raiders were following a defined course marked by the river Severn, the Malvern and Clent Hills to Birmingham and the Midland cities, flares and incendiaries were dropped night after night in this area occasioning vigilance on the part of Wardens. The issue of Mackintoshes on Jan 2nd & Jan 7th was a great boon, and the urgency for the organisation of Fire-Fighters as distinct from Wardens duties was accepted on January 10th [the falling of the land-mines in Quarry Bank on Dec 20th undoubtedly contributed to the response made to the house to house canvas for fire wardens] The Wardens and prospective Fire-Watchers were entertained in the Netherend school-room on Jan 16th.

February 1st By invitation of the head Warden, Cradley, Mr J Wesley Cooper, the Wardens of all three Posts A1 A2 A3 were entertained at a Dinner and Concert held in Oakley Works Hall, Overend.

February 13th & 14th The head Warden visited A3 Netherend and the organisation of the Fire-Watchers was instituted.

February 18th H.R.H. The Duke of Kent inspected the Wardens of the Borough at Hales Owen, His Highness spoke personally to Wardens Mrs Smith and the Minister- the weather was bitterly cold and severe.

March 4th Mr Storrs was appointed Chief Fire Watcher and a room was placed at their disposal for ‘signing on’ etc. at the Netherend Day-school. The Warden’s post was by this means kept officially for the use of Wardens only.

March 11th, 12th 13th Enemy raiders inflicted severe damage in Birmingham, dropping a few incendiaries in this district.

March 20th The instruction of Fire fighters A3 was furthered particularly in respect of Maypole Hill.

April 9th 10th Destructive raids occurred again at Birmingham and Coventry; wardens and fire-fighters A3 were all on duty till 3 am each night.

April 6th British forces occupy Addis Ababa, and Germany declared war on Yugo Slavia and Greece.

April 27th The Premier Mr Winston Churchill broadcast the retreat from Greece and reverses in N Africa.

May The House of Commons was destroyed by enemy action.

May 2nd 3rd Wardens & Fire fighters were on duty till 2am before the sirens sounded the all-clear.

May 20th A demonstration practice of Wardens was held at A3

May 30th 31st The alert was operative until 3.30 am each night.

- June 1st Disastrous raids were inflicted upon Plymouth and also upon Merseyside-numbers of raiders passed overhead Wardens were on duty throughout the night.
- June 14th The Funeral of Eric Turley Messenger A3 took place at Cradley St Peter, attended by the Minister as Head Warden A3 and officials of the Borough Wardens Service. [death was not caused by enemy action]
- July 2nd A demonstration practice of the Borough Wardens was held A3 taking its full share.
- July 8th Raid upon Wolverhampton the alert was in force until the early morning-it was reported that one plane was brought down, four being killed.
- July 8th & 9th In consequence of the illness of Miss Bartindale, the Headmistress of the Netherend Day School, the Minister assisted with classes until other assistance was obtained.
- July 26th The alert was sounded for a 'mock invasion' from 2pm till 8 all wardens were on duty.
- August 8th Again a second practice.
- August 12th Big fires were caused at Booth Lane, Glaze-brick works and bombs were dropped at Oakham Dudley, Tividale and the Delph -Wardens on duty all night. Fires were watched from the windows of the A3 post. The screeching of bombs hurtling through the air gave rise to much alarm in the village. Wardens flung themselves down in the street, others declared they had been carried off their feet-no serious casualties however.
- August 13th A.P.S. Heale takes his first flight in a Stirling Bomber.
- August 14th The Right Hon. Clement Attlee broadcast announcing that President Wilson and the Premier Mr Winston Churchill were meeting in the Atlantic.
- September 10th A3 Head Warden-the Minister-by request of the Borough Chief Warden-refused permission to the fire fighters to attend Warden Meetings.
- October 17th & 18th Messrs Storrs & Rawlings made responsible for the keys of the day school and the rota of Fire wardens.
- October 20th Wardens undertake the registration of all the households in the A3 area.
- October 31st Wardens meeting cancelled -alert at 9.pm
- November 29th Wardens organise a very successful concert for the A3 Soldiers Comforts Fund- Organised by Mr Glover -Robeani.
sum received £13.10s.6d. 34 Gifts Netherend 5/-
8 Congregation 5/-
 & Mr Glover's son 5/-
- December 7th Japan attacks Pearl Harbour and declares War on America and Britain.
- December 10th America declares War on Japan and Germany.
- December 11th The Head Mistress, Miss Bartindale of the Netherend Day-school, cooperates in the use of the school as a rest centre and preparations are made to that end.
- December 17th Mrs Esther Jones dies at the Infirmary, Kidderminster. A native of Netherend, resident in the village all her life, a quaint personality, a convert to Methodism she attended the Hayes Lane Chapel. Her evangelical fervour and devotion was characterised as 'the Virgin Mary'. Jonah and Mrs Esther Jones attached themselves later to Park Lane Chapel and from 1932 -October she attended morning devotions at 9.15 regularly. In the first black-out season 1939 she fell when visiting her friend Mrs Charles Evans, and was taken to the Infirmary where she died, she was interred at Netherend on December 20th.
- December 18th A day of thick fog, alert at 8pm.
- December 23rd Report that the Premier has gone to Wolverhampton to confer with the President.
- December 24th Wardens give £2.0.0. to the Borough Soldiers comfort fund.

December
25th

A3 Wardens Post closed till midnight –Post Warden D Smith & rota messenger required to be on duty at that time.

1942

In response to the request of President Roosevelt, January 1st. was regarded as a day of National Prayer throughout the Country, the Act of Worship was one in fellowship with the people of the United States. That great country having taken up the challenge of war with Japan on December 8th.and with Germany and Italy on December 11th last. The year opened therefore with the hope somewhat sharpened that the darkest days of anxiety respecting the ultimate issues of the war lay in the past. Britain was standing no longer alone, rumours were current also that Mr Churchill was in conference with the President. Recent war news confirmed the gravity and seriousness of the German strategy; the almost nightly wail of the sirens the roar of the aircraft and gun fire, and the pitch blackness of the winter nights were features of the opening year.

The School-room was prepared for the Christmas and New Year Festivals with such decorations as the War-Years still made available of pre-war usage, and a Watch-night service announced. The Club-room was specially arranged but no bell summoned the villagers to worship – Mrs Heale and the Minister were the only persons present. After the midnight hour had passed the schoolroom was locked and a visit paid to the wardens on duty at the post.

The Chapel was opened for Prayer about 10 o'clock in the morning, but no set time for a public service was arranged, the Chapel remained open until 4pm.

The Anniversary Although the older people of the village still refer to the 2nd Sunday of May as the "Charity " Sunday and the printed leaflets and service booklets prepared for the Anniversary continue to bear the title "Sunday –School Anniversary" The 2nd. Sunday in May is generally regarded and become known as the Chapel Anniversary. The Chapel at Netherend was opened on the 2nd. Sunday of May 1796, the occasion being also that of the "Charity-school Sermons." On the 10th day of the Month the celebrations were held, the Rev Laurence Chandler M.A. of Kidderminster conducted the worship and delivered the sermon. Although travelling by bus was difficult and many who make the occasion an annual pilgrimage to the chapel were unable to attend, the chapel was well filled with worshippers. The scholars of the Sunday-school rendered two hymns as usual from the "Charity Seats" in the Gallery. There was no morning service.

United Nations Sunday In accord with the call of the Christian Churches Sunday June 14th was a day of Prayer and Thanksgiving for the United Nations, the Allies of the war. The minister officiated at the Morning and Evening Services. The symbol of the United Nations is suggestive of the end of Imperialism- the end also of aggressive Bolshevism and Communism- and again the end of Isolationism- "the shape of things to come" when the weapons of war are still, and the thunder of guns cease, and men and nations come together to design the peace and resolve to live on terms of goodwill. Mr F Bloomer President of the Cradley Free Church Council addressed the Adult Class in the afternoon at 3 o'clock. The subject of the address was-Publishing your Christian Faith- Mr Cyril Attwood presided.

The Centenary of the Inquirer On Sunday July 5th Attention was called to 100 years of publication of the Inquirer. The lesson read was from "The Soul of the Bible" page 263.

September 3rd The 3rd Anniversary of the Declaration of War – by request of His Majesty The King was commemorated as a day of Prayer- The parsonage Radio was installed in the chapel and the Broadcast Service heard: A United Free Church Service was held at the Baptist church at 7 o'clock. The Service was conducted by the president of the Free Church Council – Mr Frank Bloomer; Prayer was offered by the Rev. Knox Wylie; the Lesson was read by the Rev. A J Heale and the Rev J Sykes delivered the address. The Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough were among the congregation.

Remembrance Day November 11th. The Armistice Remembrance Day commemorations were held on Sunday November 8th. Services were held in the Chapel at 11 o'clock and 3.15pm.

conducted by the Minister. In order to enable the Minister to attend the Ex-servicemen's Remembrance Service at the Parish Church, Mr Ernest Attwood concluded the Chapel service. At the request of the Head Warden- the Minister attend the Service at the Parish Church in Warden uniform, and led the Netherend Wardens in the Parade after the service. The Minister read one of the lessons at the Service. The Commemoration was also observed in the schoolroom at 6.30.

The Sunday Morning Services The Morning service has been seriously affected by War conditions, particularly during the early months of the year. When there were frequent air raids over the Midlands and North Western areas necessitating Wardens to be on night duty, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights almost continuously, and the 'rest' of the general populace was broken until the early hours of the morning. The heating restrictions imposed upon public buildings too had its restraining effects during the winter months. The chapel was so cold on February 15th that the organist Mr J Griffiths refused to come on Sunday mornings – from that date onward the minister used the small harmonium and the services were held regularly throughout the year excepting April 19th, May 10th and the holiday Sundays in September.

The attendance throughout the year has been small, but the faithful few loyally persisted. Mr H Cartwright, Miss Ida Cross, the brothers Vernon and Donald Hough, Mrs Heale, and on occasions others. The scholars of the Sunday school number about 12, remained with the congregation.

The Sunday school

The school has been held regularly in the morning at 10.30 continuing into the 11 o'clock service and in the afternoon at 2.15. The numbers of scholars on the books for the first half of the year was Girls 24 and boys 12. At the close of the year the numbers were girls 28 and boys 15 total 43.

The scholars were entertained by the Women's League on Jan 7th and the Ministers Party given by the generosity of Mr Ernest Stevens was enjoyed on January 28th. They were taken by bus to Birmingham on February 11th to see the Pantomime at the Alexandra Theatre.

On the occasion of the Anniversary the scholars sang two hymns- they occupied the "Charity seats" of the gallery as is the usual custom. The prizes for attendance during 1941 were not distributed until August 26th Mrs G M Mole presided and addressed the children and parents. The scholars cooperated with the Free Churches Sunday schools and arranged a collection for Corbett Hospital- The Minister and scholars attended the Hospital Gift-Day meeting held at High Town Ragged School on Monday July 27th The scholars field-day was conducted by Mr R W Powell on Saturday September 26th and held in the Parsonage, glebe-tea was served by the Women's League in the school-room.

The Young People's League and Youth Club The League continues its activities throughout the year, Mrs Heale and Miss Ida Cross being in charge of the general procedures, the Minister being chairman and organiser. 40 to 50 young people gathered weekly on Thursday evenings- games were indulged, lectures arranged, entertainments and concerts given. Throughout the year the League cooperated whole-heartedly with the Youth Clubs of the Free Churches and the Parish Church of Cradley. The Minister assisting in the United Youth movement of the whole Parish. Some dissatisfaction arose in the summer, and there was a breakaway on the part of some from the League. The League invited Mrs Carter, County Youth Organiser to address and advise them on May 12th. And attended a Youth Conference on June 12th Inter-visiting with other clubs was carried out by rota from the beginning of the year. Such fraternising of the various Free Churches with Netherend has not been known in recent years- the prospect of closer unity and toleration to breaking down of religious prejudices seemed remarkably bright. Difficulties however began to gather between the leaders of the Free Church Youth Movement – Ministers and laymen – and by the end of the year it was evident that the movement had failed in its original purpose. Netherend continued to hold its Young Peoples League every Thursday.

The Rev Ken Murren addressed the United Youth Clubs at Colley Gate Methodist Church on March 9th. A suggestion that clubs should open on Sunday evenings for games was vigorously discussed and in some quarters resented.

United Youth Service was held at High Town on June 28th The Rev Chrimes of Graingers Lane Methodist Church delivered the address.

During the summer months a series of very pleasing Garden Parties were held by the invitation of interested people including Alderman & Mrs H J Cox, Mr & Mrs Harold Willetts, Mr&Mrs Blackwell, the Parsonage, Netherend.

The Pargeter Trust Meetings were held on January 27th, March 3rd, June 3rd, September 14th, December 8th Luncheon was served as usual at the Imperial Hotel.

Cradley Free Church Council The cordial friendly relationships and working partnerships of the Minister and the officers and Committee of the Cradley Free Church council continued to be intimate and personal throughout most of the year. In the Autumn however differences arose over the proposals being made to hold Quarterly and later Monthly Services for children of the Cradley Groups of day schools, services designed to be held during school hours. Objection was taken to the Ministers intervention to stay the proceedings. Denunciation was made by the Rev. Knox Wylie, Baptist, Rev W Sykes, Methodist, Mr F Bloomer, President of the C F CC in December. In consequence Mr Edwards, Baptist was requested to discharge the duties of Secretary to the C F CC again. He consented after the meeting held on December 11th.

(Nov 18th Nov 25th meetings at the Vicarage)

The discharge of the Secretarial duties by the minister throughout the year entailed large responsibilities shared with the President and the Rev Knox Wylie. -The Cradley Free Churches Youth Movement was organised and maintained with popular enthusiasm by the young people of all the churches. The weekly interesting of the clubs, by rota programme was a promising field of closer cooperation between the churches. A very successful Hospital gift day was arranged for July 27th Unfortunately through a misunderstanding the matron of Corbett Hospital did not arrive at High Town where she was expected- but came to Netherend and returned to the Hospital also disappointed.

The Annual Meetings of the F C Council was held on March 2nd a service was held in the afternoon – Tea conference followed and an Evening meeting- The president of the W M Federation being the chief speaker.

The Rev Gilwhite Expresident attended the meeting on October 9th. Thanksgiving Service was held at the Baptist Church on August 3rd. for the escape (which) *crossed out replaced with?* The whole Parish during the week of air-raids July 27th to Aug 3rd. Bethesda Chapel and the Mission Church???? and a few houses only received damage.

Intervention was attempted on behalf of Overend Mission to stay the government's requisition of the railing about the buildings but to no avail.

Mrs Heale and Miss Cross were appointed representatives to the F C C by the Netherend Chapel Committee on November 29th. The Minister passed the secretarial books to Mr Edwards early in Jan 1943. Concluding a very interesting period of experience with the Orthodox Churches. The Free Church Council in cooperation with the Vicar Rev R Yaxley arranged services taken for the other churches chiefly by Mrs Heale.

Colley Gate Methodist	March 24 th
Brierley Hill Brotherhood	June 7 th
Christ Church	June 22 nd
High Town Rally	August 10 th
Hayes Lane Lye	
Baptist church	August 24 th .

Nursing Association The Association met at Colley Gate House early in the year – Jan 7th & again Jan 19th & Feb 22nd. Miss Russell of Worcester, The matron of Queens Nursing Institution addressed the meeting at the High Town schoolroom. The Meetings were held frequently in successive months, Mrs McCarthy? excellent service to the Nurses and Collectors throughout the year. Admirable work has been done, and public thanks expressed to the nurses for their efficient

services and whole-hearted attention to their duties. The minister was in attendance as Chairman to most of the meetings.

Citizens Advice Bureau The Minister attended for duties as per the rota set out by the secretary- Mrs Willetts, (9 engagements) the Library at Colley Lane being used as an Office. These duties were usually an afternoon-Thursday one every six weeks. The Minister was also a representative for the Cradley area of the Ministry of Information Meetings were held in the Council Chamber Hales Owen. Local matters relative to the necessities of the War were discussed in conjunction with the Ministry Official resident in Birmingham. Particular meetings were held on Jan 30th, June 28th, August 18th, October 23rd.

The Board of Education The Minister continues to be a County nominee to the Cradley Board of School Managers and the District Education Committee. Meetings were held monthly during the school terms. The Ministers attendance is recorded; and visits have been paid to the various schools as requested by the Clerk, and the decision of the Board at the meetings. Frequent visits also have been paid to the Hales Owen Technical School- Vernon Hough a member of the Sunday school and regular worshipper at Morning & Evening Service has become a senior pupil of the school, with a view of Matriculation, Donald Hough, his younger brother attends the class also. Mrs Hough their mother attends evening classes; and Laura and Doris Ray other members of the Sunday school attend for shorthand and typing.

Mr Maurice Jacks, Director of Education for Cambridge-son of Principal L P Jacks –Manchester College. Oxford- addressed a notable gathering at the Girls High School, Stourbridge, on Saturday June 6th. Miss Ida Cross was present to represent Red Hill School and the Netherend Congregation.

Air Raid Precautions & Warden Service. Netherend Post 3. Cradley

The vigilance required by continuous air-raid warnings laid heavy responsibilities upon the whole of the A.R.P. Services of the Borough and the neighbourhood. These services here reinforced by the recently formed Fire-watchers organisation; an enrolment meeting was held on Jan 7th

Jan 19th Later Mr Storrs was appointed Chief Fire Watcher for the village and the day schools were used for their Duty Post.

Alarm Sirens were heard frequently during the winter months necessitating Wardens to be on "duty" until early hours of the morning.

A tragedy occurred at the Fire Watchers Hut in Hayes Lane- two young men were affixed with fumes from a stove.

March 27th At the request of Chief Warden, The Netherend School was equipped as a rest centre- Miss Bartendale- the Head Mistress appointed Superintendant with Mrs Heale as Deputy on March 27th.

On April 2nd the Wardens were on duty all night occasioned by the blaze at Dudley. The fire was watched from the windows of the A3 post. The raiding planes were seen advancing and bombs dropped.

July 27th 28th
& 30th All night duties were enforced – a rain of incendiaries fell in the Cradley area on the last night – setting fire to one house in Mogul Lane – the Mission Church at Lyde Green- the Bethesda Church Cradley and causing other damage.

August 4th The old well of the village at the Parsonage was uncovered and the water tested- the cistern under the private road leading to the Parsonage examined.

July 7th A Pig Club was formed and a sow and litter of pigs bought, the pig-sties at the Mogul Post were used.

June 28th The A3 Netherend Wardens were issued with battledress.

October 11th The Cradley Wardens attended the Harvest Services at 11am at the Netherend Chapel.

February 28th,

March 2nd

March 7th. Concerts and Entertainments were organised and given by Mr Robinson in the Netherend Sunday School on behalf of those in the services – gone from the village. The sum raised was £ The recipients numbering Received 5/- each.

November 26th A dance was held at the Liberal Club Colley Lane – the proceeds were devoted to the Netherend Forces Fund and the Borough Comforts Fund.

December 14th The new service-time sheets of Wardens duties were issued and payments taken by the Wardens.

December 15th A Warden's Social was held in the Sunday-school room a very enjoyable evening.

1943

During this fourth year of the 2nd World War the customary gathering together of the Congregation for Sunday worship and the commemorative events associated with the Chapel have been most faithfully maintained by the congregation, account must be taken of the necessities of the war, the demand for Sunday work, the difficulties of travelling and the personal anxieties which the war occasions, if the decline in attendance at worship is noted. The spirit of steady determination to see things through which is characteristic of these war-days was evidenced as the year was ushered in – twelve people assembled for the "Watch-night" service which was held in the School-room. Hymns were sung, prayers offered, and silence observed at midnight. Light refreshments were served after which the Minister & Mrs Heale called upon the Wardens on Post duty and remained until 1.30am with them at the Old Mogul Post.

The 25th Anniversary of the Armistice Nov 11th 1918

The Commemoration and Remembrance was observed on Sunday November 14th Mrs Heale made the commemoration poppies as usual using the last of the red paper procured before 1939.

Assistance rendered to other Congregations –chiefly Women's meetings.-

Colley Gate Methodist Church January 12th Hayes Lane Jan 29th

High Town Ragged School March 23rd Christ Church Cradley Heath March 29th

Colley Gate Methodist Church June 7th Christ Church Cradley Heath July 27th

Two Gates Mission August 15th by invitation of the Minister & Mrs Heale held a service at Netherend Chapel and enjoyed games on the lawn.

On Sunday April 4th the Minister addressed the Brierley Hill Brotherhood.

Mrs Heale addressed the Hasbury Women's Own at the Bethel Mission on August 22nd. And the Minister attended the Fellowship of Reconciliation at Hasbury on October 29th addressed by Mr Wellock –ex MP for Stourbridge. The Minister, Mr & Mrs Hough, Vernon and Donald had to walk there and back.

The Free Church Council

In consequence of the Minister's action whereby exception was taken by the Cradley Free church ministers- the Rev Knox Whyle – Baptist and the Rev of the Trinity Methodist church- connected with the proposed holding of religious services in school hours – the Minister was strongly denounced at the Free Church Council held on Jan 8th and the secretary's minute book and other papers held by the minister were handed to Mr Edwards after the Morning service at the Chapel on Jan 23rd Mr F Bloomer –President of the Free Church Council – acquiesced in these proceedings. The Minister thanked those one or two gentlemen who supported him at the meeting on Jan 8th From then onward the Minister did not continue to attend the Free Church Council – neither did the representatives of the Park Lane Chapel attend the monthly meeting.

The Free Church Council Annual Meetings were held on February 11th B Hughes of London delivered the service, at the service at 4.0'clock Tea followed and the Annual Meeting was held later.

The Nursing Association

The Minister has continued to preside over the meetings of the Nursing Association – meetings were held at Colley Gate House by kind invitation of Mrs Green- in the beginning of the year and later at the Colley Gate Methodist Church.

James Cartwright only son of Mr & Mrs J Cartwright – Two Gates- Grenadier Guards – reported missing during the Rommel Offensive in North Africa. The Minister called on Mrs Cartwright on June 25th The news was officially confirmed on July 6th. By request of the Cartwright family the Minister accompanied the widow-mother and members of the family to London on Wednesday July 21st to attend a “memorial service” at the “Guards Chapel” by invitation of the chaplain-The chaplain after the simple but very dignified and appropriately rendered service personally approached the family, expressed sympathy and condolence. The morning was very wet.

Cardinal Hinsley- the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster died on March 17th. On Friday October 29th Reginald Stamford of Mogul Lane, scholar of the Sunday school and member of the Adult class and Young Peoples League – Prisoner of War Germany from the evacuation of Dunkirk, arrived at his home at 9 o'clock pm (Prisoner of War 3 ½ years repatriated because of chest wound) The village was decorated with flags in his honour. The Minister and Mrs Heale returned from Devonshire the following day called on him at the home of his parents at 10.30 and found him looking remarkably well after his terrible experiences in concentration camps. Flags were hung from the trees at the entrance to the chapel. On Sunday November 7th the Family attended the afternoon service at the chapel. The Family did not signify their intention beforehand, the service was conducted by Mrs Heale – the Minister having previously arranged to conduct the services at the Old Meeting House at Dudley. Owing to fuel shortage the chapel was very cold unfortunately. A benefit concert was given on behalf of Reginald Stamford on Nov 23rd, the Minister presided- although the night was very stormy and heavy rain fell the schoolroom was very crowded £13 13.0. was handed to Stanley who acknowledged the gift with a short speech of thanks.

The Board of Managers Cradley Schools and District Committee.

The Minister attended the monthly meetings of the two Educational Committees as opportunity permitted. On June 3rd Mr W H White was appointed Clerk to the Board and on October 5th the Director of Education for Worcestershire, A R Logan Esq. met the Board for personal consultation on Educational matters.

The A 3 Post. C D Wardens. A R P

The Warden Service continued their nightly vigil at the post, the Old Mogul Inn- the regular rota of Warden duty was maintained and reported to Headquarters, Hales Owen, week by week- the hours of this voluntary service continued from 9 pm to 1 am. The Post wardens W Davis and David Smith remaining on duty from 6pm to 6am and two? ? sleeping on the premises every night. W Davis was transferred to A? early in ? but continued to assist in the management of the P? club with the wardens (subscribing members)

On January 31st a united A R P & C D Religious service was held at Trinity Church (Methodist) Cradley. The parade was led by the Chief Warden Mr W Cooper and the Deputy Mr H Jones, worship was conducted by the Rev.

Refresher classes were held at the three ‘Posts’ and lectures delivered by the Chief Officers of the Service during the early months of the year.

An ‘alert’ was sounded at 9 15 pm on March 4th lasting until 9 50 all the A 3 Wardens were on duty and the Messengers excepting those at essential work. The A3 Wardens by permission of the Chapel Committee occupied the Sunday schoolroom on March 6th & 7th for a concert arranged by Mr (Robeani) Glover several of the scholars of the Sunday school took part. The proceeds of these successful entertainments was donated to the Warden’s Netherend Soldiers Fund & the Borough Forces Fund.

Donations of 3/- each was given to the following men and women of the village in the Forces.

Harold Homer	James H?	Jesse? Weston
William	Ronald Bagley	Noel Harris
Robert Good	Albert Crampton	A R Hackett
Reginald Jones	Clifford Blount	Eric Detheridge
Harold Etheridge	Tony Blount	Wilfred Ray
Etheridge	Arthur Rowley	William Butterworth
Henry Batham	Benjamin Jones	Fred Shaw
Henry Bentley	A Philip S Heale	Ronnie? er
Walter Emery	Arthur Groves	George A Shaw
Geoffrey Russon	James Hill	Albert Riley
- Proce	Ralph Hall	Clarence Attwood
Eric Cox	William Davis	William T Higgs
Norman Grearly	Ralph Cox	Glover
Harry Harper	Thomas Handley	
Ladies		
Kerran Crampton	Mary Buffery	Ethel Cook

The evening of March 6th a great storm raged – two trees were uprooted in the chapel ground and monumental stones broken.

The seating accommodation was kindly supplied by Mr Johnson of the Horse & Jockey Inn, Mogul Lane.

The Chief Warden called the Cradley Wardens together on March 16th to create a “Social Service” within the A R P principal club rooms at A” post.

A St John’s Ambulance Parade and service was held at St Peter’s Church on Sunday April 11th – the Warden Service took part.

Unauthorized entry into the A3 post by men with a van on Wednesday April 20th [thought to be an attempt to take away the remaining pigs led to the resignation of? Davis from the pig club.]

The Chief Warden launched a St Dunstan’s Hospital appeal within the wardens service at the close of the year – a silver cup to be presented to the Warden Post which raised the largest amount per warden.

A3 arranged for Wardens to collect at the Clifton Cinema on Dec 27th, the Temp Cinema on Dec 3rd & 15th. Individual Wardens collected at their respective works,- Mr Timmins raised the largest personal amount at A3. And A3 raised the largest amount per warden, the Chief Warden Mr Cooper presented the cup to the Post; for a time the cup was kept on show at the Post, the wardens later were allowed to take charge of it for a given time, if they desired, still later it was kept at the Parsonage, the exact amount of money raised can be ascertained from the records of the Borough C D Warden Service.

[When the service was disbanded the cup was handed back to the Chief Warden Mr Wesley Cooper with the request that he would retain it in his possession.]

An “alert” was sounded from 1pm to 2pm on May 16th and a house to house collection made for the Borough Forces Fund on July 16th and an all night “alert” occurred on April 4th.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Minister fulfilled his rota duties at the Library on appointed dates throughout the year. And attended the Ministry of Information held at the Council House Hales Owen on April? June 4th September 10th November 19th.

Items of Interest

January 20 th	A handbell was placed in the Parsonage Porch to be rung in case of need.
April 4 th	Double Summer Time began- discontinued on August 14 th
April 7 th	Great storm raged – the wind brought down many slates and chimneys in the village and ripped open the roof of the Chapel.
June 4 th	The Marsh family were received at the Parsonage –refugees from London Raids.

July 10 th	The Invasion of Sicily (Europe began)
August 5 th	Notice of prohibition of visitors to South coast towns
August 9 th	Mr Churchill goes to Canada the conference ended on
August 24 th	Berlin was heavily bombed –58 planes reported missing.
September 3 rd	4th Anniversary of the beginning of the War-
	The Minister took part in a joint service at Messrs Kings Works at Netherend.
September 12 th	Thanksgiving for the unconditional surrender of Italy.
September 20 th	Third Anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Britain,
November 20 th	Members of Russian & German Youth Movement [Refugees in Birmingham] gave a concert at the Technical school, Hales Owen.

1944

By arrangement with the Wardens service of Netherend a New Years Eve party was held in the Sunday School room, refreshments were provided by the Wardens and the Sunday School scholars repeated the Nativity play- the little brown path to Bethlehem- superintended by Mrs Heale and assisted by members of the Youth Club. The Chief Warden Mr Wesley Cooper and the Deputy Mr Herbert Jones came to give their greetings. Games were indulged in later in the evening and at 11.30 a company of about 50 persons remained for a Watch night service. The customary hymns were sung Prayer was offered, a short address delivered by the Minister and "Silence" as the year 1943 passed away and 1944 began its record of events. Before the company went away to their respective homes Auld Lang Syne was sung and good wishes for the year expressed.

Concern was felt by reason of the decision of the miners in this area to remain on "strike" although their comrades in Durham and SW have decided to go back. Mr Attwood is a miner.

The Remembrance-Bread and Wine

The Observance of this commemorative ceremonial was continued on the First Sunday mornings of each month as part of the "Service" following the address. The silver plates, cups and tankard were used maintaining the ancient tradition of the Congregation as per the dates engraved upon them, cups 1796, plates 1819.

Mr Robert Powell & Mr Harry Cartwright never participated in the ceremonial but loyally attended as usual.

The Minister approached the customary participants respecting the "Remembrance" observance for Sunday April 2nd – whether it should be postponed to the following Sunday- Easter Sunday -? It was resolved – that in the interest of unity and fellowship of the small morning Congregation to discontinue the observance – that no public announcement should be made of the decision unless asked for by the officers of the committee. The last distribution of "Bread and Wine" therefore was on Sunday Morning February 13th.

The participants were	Mrs Heale
	Miss Cross
	Vernon Hough
	Donald Hough
Non-participants were	Mr Robert Powell
	Mr Harry Carpenter
	Miss Joyce Ray

Mr & Mrs Hough sent apologies for absence also Mrs Craddock

The Observance had been postponed from Feb 6th because of the Memorial service –Mrs Winifred Webb.

The Kidderminster Guild was notified later that the "Remembrance" observance had been discontinued and that for the time being the guild itself would cease to function as a separate institution. Hope was expressed that it might be received again after the close of the war.

Mothering Sunday

On Sunday March 29th The Junior Sunday School combined with the Primary Dept, a joint service was held in the Parsonage sitting-room at 2.15 The service was conducted by Mrs Heale and a baby was enrolled on the "Cradle Roll."

The Chapel Anniversary

The Thanksgiving was held on Sunday May 13th The services at 3'o clock and 6.30 [restricted lighting being allowed as and from the introduction of Double Summer Time- Palm Sunday April 2nd.] were conducted and sermons delivered by the Rev. Richard Lee MA of Coventry- Although the difficulties of travelling prevented many of the Friends of Netherend from joining in the Anniversary Celebrations_ the Chapel was comfortably filled for both services, excepting the immediate front rows. Mr Eric Griffiths assisted his father, Mr Javen Griffiths at the organ and was accompanying by some of the men and boys of his own choir at Quarry Bank. Miss C Hyde was the vocalist for the evening service. Mr Lees practical and active participation in the Labour movement of the City of Coventry, of which he is a councillor added interest to his visit to Netherend, his expositions of practical christianity were received with commendation.

Holiday Sundays

The Minister and Mrs Heale were on holiday in Devonshire Sunday August 20th 27th and September 2nd. No Morning service was held in consequence. The Evening Service on August 20th and 27th were conducted by Mr John Perkins of Lye and thanks were cordially expressed to him by the congregation.

A portion of the ceiling of the chapel collapsed on Tuesday August 9th whilst it was being inspected by Mr Frank Shaw -Warden, Mr Robert Powell secretary and Christopher Whiley caretaker fortunately no one was hurt. The chapel was being repaired on September 3rd and a notice postponing the evening service was posted on the door- Mr & Mrs W Hill however came to worship and were entertained by Mr & Mrs Alfred Hough at Hill View Park Lane.

Anniversary of the Call to the Churches

As requested by the GA September 17th was made the Anniversary of the "Call to the churches" issued a year ago: and the £100,000 Appeal fund was announced to the congregation. The representatives of the congregation appointed to attend the launching of the Appeal in the M. C. W. area on Saturday Sept 16th at the Church of the Messiah were the Minister, Mrs Heale and Mr Robert Powell Secretary. The Officers of the Appeal for the Midland Churches were appointed.

The Children's Day Service

This service was held on July 2nd and repeated on July 9th The children were arranged on each side of the pulpit, the tiered platform was not erected- the Primary Department were accommodated on an improvised platform in the Evers pew. The service was conducted in a most commendable manner by Vernon Hough and the lesson was read equally well by his brother Donald. Vocal solos were rendered by master Derrick Perks and the other children contributed small recitals of verses appropriate to the occasion. The address was delivered by Mrs Lydia Heale – the inclement weather kept several parents of the scholars away and a request for a repeat service the following Sunday was readily agreed.

October 1st was a Sunday to be chronicled – the regulations respecting Double Summer-time came to an end for the year, at the same time restricted lighting was permitted in places of worship not covered by the "Black-out" requirements. Evening service therefore was conducted in the chapel for the remainder of the year. Alternate lights being used during the Devotions and all the lights out excepting the pulpit light during the address.

It should be noted also that the Chapel was open for daily prayer on D Day June 6th and daily as from June 11th.

The Harvest Festival

The thanksgiving was celebrated on October 8th the Chapel was decorated by the ladies of the congregation on Saturday October 7th the gifts were thought to be more in quantity than usual – many of the congregation and villagers having allotments and bought the produce of their labours. Wheat and barley were provided for the old gas standards, and the five loaves and two fishes were displayed in customary fashion.

Tea was served in the schoolroom after the service, the gifts of fruit to sick and aged folk were distributed as usual. And the sale of the remainder took place on Tuesday Oct 10th Mrs Lily Attwood being the auctioneer.

Armistice Day

Was observed on November 12th the day was exceedingly wet- the attendance was small- The ex-service mens parade and service at St Peter's church was held at 3 15pm. That too was affected by the weather.

Christmas Eve

December 24th Christmas Carols were sung and the Minister spoke of the Holy Family- during the evening service there were about 30 persons present. The Morning attendance was smaller than usual because of a dense fog.

The Chapel Committee

During the year the committee has held few regular monthly meetings, business which required immediate attention was arranged by the officers usually after service on Sundays. The Annual Meeting was held on June 28th See the records kept by the secretary Mr Robert Powell.

The Pargeter Trust

Notice was received from the office of Messrs Copeley Harding, Solicitors, Temple St that the esteemed Secretary of the Trust Mr Gibbs had died on January 1st after a very short illness. Mr Gibbs had been the proprietor of Firm only a few years and succeeded Mr Harding as the secretary of the Trust. Messrs Harding & Sons were appointed Solicitors to the Trustees of the Trust from its foundation Jan 28th 1868 by the late Miss Caroline Pargeter of Foxcote. The death of Mr Gibbs following that of Mr Harding in the South of France soon after the outbreak of war severs the last connecting links of association with those who compounded the Trust. A Special meeting was convened on January 18th when the Minister & the Rev T Gorton of Kingswood were appointed to approach Mr Arthur Leslie Smith of Messrs Lee Crowder & Co, Newhall St, to undertake the duties of Secretary to the Trust. Meetings were called and business transacted on March 7th & June 9th And Mr A L Smith was accordingly appointed and accepted the Secretaryship on June 13th. The procedures of customary business were effected on Sept 19th & Dec 5th at the offices of Messrs Lee Crowder & Co Newhall St. Lunch was provided at a restaurant in Broad St.

Youth Club

Several young men of the club were members of the 'Messenger Service' of the A.R.P. Post A3 Netherend and rendered acceptable duties there week by week until the post was officially closed. Many of the girls busied themselves with knitting gloves, socks, mufflers, etc. for men in the forces, mainly personal gifts to friends and relatives. The club members assisted in the local efforts at Quarry Bank and Cradley for 'St Dunstons' Hospital for the blind, as well as the 'Parcels for Soldiers Friend' and the Cradley & Hales Owen Soldiers Fund. During the year also the club lost many of its members by their enlistment in the Forces.

The Educational Board & District Meetings

The Minister discharged his duties as a member of the Cradley Schools Board and the District Meetings held throughout the year, the meetings were held on the first Tuesday and third Wednesday of each month excepting holiday months. He attended also the meeting held at Hales Owen on February 8th addressed by the president of the National Union of Teachers, and was appointed visitor of the local schools for the Month of April/May.

The Nursing Association

The work of the District Nursing Association has been continuously and zealously carried on throughout the year, the Minister being ably supported in his Chairmanship by the able cooperation of Mrs McCarthy, Secretary & Treasurer, Mrs Green, Mrs Deakin, Mrs Hickman and the other local ladies, and a devoted number of collectors. Meetings of the Association were held at Colley Gate House & the Methodist Chapel Committee room. The work of the two nurses Miss Dowling & Miss Manton cannot be too highly praised.

The Wardens Service

With the beginning of the New Year 1944 the Warden Service effort on behalf of 'St Dunstons Hospital' for the Blind [Soldiers] came to an end. Netherend Wardens A3 Post was awarded a silver cup, presented by The Head Warden Mr Wesley Cooper Esq. for raising the largest sum per head – A3 raised more than £80-0-0 The cup was on exhibition at the Post for some weeks – each warden allowed to take it home, later it was kept at the Parsonage.

The attendance of Wardens to their rota duties at night was faithfully fulfilled and the registers and payments signed and dispatched to Headquarters Hales Owen week by week.

- March 19th Great relief was felt by the news received on March 19th that the German Eastern Front had collapsed – that a breakthrough had occurred in Italy and in Burma. The appeal for the Wardens Social Club made by the Head Warden Mr Cooper did not receive much support from the Wardens of the A3 post, most of the men were too busy with the allotments, and in any case after a heavy days work and return home, to turn out again to engage in games at A1 & A2 was considered too far.
- April 29th Extensive raid on Teighnmouth, Devon occurred in which a relation of the Minster was killed. Also in Plymouth in which a cousins house was destroyed. Head Wardens Meeting was held at post on May 10th which indicated new offensive was to be launched. News was received that our proposed visit to Plymouth must be postponed because of movements of troops throughout the district – May 15th.
An alert was sounded at 12.20.on –
- May 23rd A football match between the Messengers of A3 and the Youth club was played on the field of messrs E J V J Pearsons [Mogul Lane] which occasioned a letter of complaint to the Minister –Head Warden of A3. The Messengers were in uniform, an apology was accepted on May 23rd and the incident closed.
- May 24th Demonstration of bomb demolition was given at Colley Gate on May 24th and a Wardens & Civil Defence Parade ordered for the reception of Gen. Dobbie at St Peters Church on Sunday May 21st.
- June 4th Rome was announced to be in Allied hands.
- June 6th On D Day the great invasion fleet set out for the Normandy coast and effected a landing – the great offensive had begun.
- June 16th News was received of the 'Flying -bomb' or pilotless plane attack on South London.
- June 20th The Deputy Head Warden Mr H Jones addressed the Wardens at A3 on the Present Danger – asking the Wardens to volunteer to help in London.
- July 2nd Receive Mr & Mrs Marsh & Wendy at the Parsonage [friends of the Minister] seeking respite from the dangers in London occasioned by the Flying –bombs.
- July 23rd Evacuees from London arrive at Lye and Stourbridge.
- August 3rd News received that German Forces are broken on all fronts.
- August 13th News confirmed.
- September 12th The Wardens service was suspended -A3 Post closed down.
- October 17th General Meeting of A3 Wardens called.
- December 19th A meeting of A3 Wardens was held in the Parsonage Sitting-room when an illuminated address was presented to the Head Warden Mr Wesley Cooper in recognition of his great personal service to the District during the War Years. The presentation was made by the Minister – the address was designed & executed by Mr

Bissell of Hasbury. Later the challenge silver cup presented by Mr Cooper to A3 Wardens [already referred to] was handed back to him by Mr J Timmins on behalf of the Wardens – with the request that he would retain it in his possession. The Warden service at Netherend was bought fittingly to a close.

December
28th

The telephone was removed from the A3 post and the Minister relinquished the keys. God save the people – May there be NO MORE WAR.

Other events

- January 29th Leonard Pettis ex-warden asks for shelter is taken in and occupies the attic room at the Parsonage until October 1945.
- February 7th W.T. Mobberley of Wollescote Lye aged 91 died – He was the oldest member of the Unitarian Church in the area, member of the Lye Congregation.
- February 26th Mrs E E Heale the Minister's mother died.
- June 15th Mrs Shaw died – tragic circumstances – wife of Mr Frank Shaw.
- June 30th Italian P O W began work at the Brickyards.
- August 15th Mrs Evans died- for many years she was a regular attendee at Morning Devotions at 9 15, during the war years she was the only one- she rarely missed, frequently she came to breakfast with the family. The Minister returned from his holiday in Devonshire to conduct the funeral.
- Sept 4th Ann Cook the daughter of the proprietor of the Tavern Inn was killed by a bus at the junction of Park Lane.
- Oct 26th Dr Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury died.

1945

Special Services

Although the immediate tensions of the war are somewhat released as the year opens, the strain upon the morale of the people remains, yet the war's end is nearer if not clearly in sight, hope is steadily rising – the lifting of the 'Black-out' restrictions permitting 'Watch-night' services with a minimum of lighting encourages that point of view. The fact that New Years Eve 1944 was a Sunday and announcements were made during the day that a service would be in the chapel as in prewar days, brought a satisfactory response from the villagers, the congregation assembled at 11 30 – the customary hymns were sung, a short address given and silence observed as the last minutes of 1944 passed away and 1945 began its historic career. The service was concluded with the singing of the New Year Hymn and the Blessing. The congregation filed out from the Chapel shaking hands with the Minister & Mrs Heale as they went away to their respective homes. About 40 to 50 persons were present.

The first Sunday of the Year was marked by the distribution to the congregation [those having sons serving in the Forces] of the G A booklet "Confidence and courage." During the address the congregation was able to refer to particular passages to which the Minister called attention. Thanks and appreciation was expressed by the parents on behalf of their sons and it was felt that the message delivered from the pulpit on this occasion had been particularly appropriate. Mention was made also to President Roosevelt's speech delivered to the Senate the day before.

The Easter celebrations

April 1st Heavy rain just before and after 6 o'clock no doubt prevented several of the congregation from attendance. Members of the Youth Club who usually attend were at the scout camp at Kinver.

Considerable excitement prevails over the War news, the Allied Forces are reported to be 60 miles beyond the Rhine, the Rhine basin is encircled and the Russians approaching Berlin.

April 15th The news of President Roosevelt's death on Thursday April 12th was a shock to the whole world. In accord with sorrow felt by the Nation the services acknowledged the

President's timely leadership in the Allied cause – God matches his men with the times. The Chapel bell was tolled on this occasion.

V E Day

Victory in Europe Day was announced by the Premier the Honourable Winston Churchill by B B C Broadcast at 3 o'clock on May 8th –Tuesday. [The formal and preliminary announcement of Germany's surrender to the Allied Forces on Saturday May 5th]

Immediately after the conclusion of the Broadcast the Minister and Mrs Heale rang the Chapel bell for 20 minutes. Announcement was made of a Thanksgiving Service at 7pm. At 6 45pm the Chapel bell was rung again and before 7 o'clock the chapel was filled.

A call to worship embodying Thanksgiving for gallantry, endurance and selfsacrifice of the Allied Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and also for the endurance and ceaseless work of ordinary men and women in factory, at the forge, in the fields and mines and in offices – contributing respectively to the victory achieved was voiced by the Minister and the congregation rose to sing the 300 year old thanksgiving hymn of Martin Rinkart- Now Thank we all our God.

A thanksgiving prayer followed, the Lords prayer was recited by all.

Hymn 224 Onward Christian Soldiers was succeeded by the lesson Psalm 96 & 100 read by Mr Vernon Hough aged 16 years [representing the rising generation for whom this day probably is of larger significance than to the rest of the human race]

The offertory was afterwards sent to assist the Hibbert Houses.

The concluding hymn 499 God bless our native land and the Blessing

The National Anthem was sung at the close.

The King, - His Majesty the King broadcast to the Nation at 9pm.

19 bonfires were seen from Homer Hill

A bonfire was lit in the fields at Mogul Lane

And children's parties were held in the Sunday School room on Thursday May 10th and again on Saturday May 12th.

The Chapel Anniversary Sunday May 13th

The occasion was necessarily a twofold Thanksgiving for the congregation – 1 the national Thanksgiving that the six years of war was at an end. 2 Thanksgiving for the honoured 241 years of continuous ministry wrought through the offices of the Congregation exercised from its foundation in the year 1704.

Although it was noted that the representatives of many of the families accustomed to meet with us on this Annual Festival were absent [mainly because of the travelling difficulties, no doubt] some few had managed to get here by bus with considerable persistence and exercise of patience at the termini at Birmingham and at Stourbridge. The Chapel was comfortably filled for both services and satisfaction was expressed that it was so.

Children's Day

The children's day service was conducted on Sunday July 29th. A low platform by the lectern and another by the font, arranged with the Primary Dept. chairs, accommodated the children. The Service was conducted by the Minister, Mrs Heale and Mrs Hough superintending the children. The lessons were read by junior school teachers, Miss Doris Ray & Mr Donald Hough. The Primary Dept. rendered two hymns and recitals were given by Marina Hough, Brian Buffery, Betty Jones and Sheila Jones. The service was enjoyed by the Congregation and the parents of the scholars.

V.J. Day

Victory over Japan which followed the atomic bombing of Japan on August 8th entailing the destruction of two cities- was not officially announced until Saturday August 11th. No service was held in the Chapel to mark the occasion – Sunday August 12th was regarded as a "Day of Prayer". The two days of holiday were not marked with the celebrations of V E Day and in accord with plans already made the Minister & Mrs Heale went on holiday to Devonshire.

They attended the Thanksgiving Service held at Biscton [Plymouth] Church on Sunday August 19th. The National Thanksgiving Day for the end of the six years of war. Although the Established Church Service was attended with the dignity of a Civil Service & Forces Parade, the simple service at the Chapel was appreciated by us the most.

The Remembrance Day Celebrations

The National Observance of Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph was resumed at 10.30 on Sunday Nov 11th. The Parsonage radio was taken into chapel and the Cenotaph Service heard. The Cradley Remembrance Day service was held at St Peter's Church at 3.15pm. A private service at the Chapel prevented the Minister taking part in the Church service. The Chapel was beautifully displayed with poppies made by Mrs Heale. The Commemoration Service was held at 6.30 and a good congregation assembled.

Assistance rendered to other churches by the Minister and Mrs Heale.

The Hasbury Fellowship of reconciliation, March 16th December 7th, Sept 7th meeting held at the Parsonage.

Womens Bright Hour	March 29 th
Graingers Lane	September 9 th
Quarry Bank [New Street]	October 23 rd .
Hayes Lane Women's meeting	March 7 th & 28 th
Colley Gate Womens meeting	June 12 th & 19 th
Christ Church Womens meeting	April 16 th

On Tuesday July 16th the Christ Church Womens meeting accompanied by their Minister Rev Beshens? Accepted the invitation for a garden party on the lawn of the Parsonage- Service was conducted in the chapel at 3 o'clock – Tea served in the garden – the ladies bringing their own eatables and games were indulged in. About 30 ladies were entertained. On Thursday 19th September the members of Trinity Methodist Womens meeting were entertained in similar fashion. The Rev & Mrs Morley Wilkes at the last moment sent an excuse for absence, although previously acceptances had been received and arrangements made by letter – request of Mrs Wilkes.

The Pargeter Trust

Meetings of the Trust were held at the offices of Lee, Crowder, Solicitors, Newhall St on March 6th June 5th Sept 17th Dec 4th Dinner was provided at Messrs Café, New St.

Education Committees

District Meetings were held on Jan 17th March 21st June 20th November 21st.
Cradley Board of Managers Feb 6th March 7th May 1st June 6th Sept 4th Oct 3rd Nov 5th.

Cradley Nursing Association

Meetings were called, over which the Minister presided – Feb 28th March 8th March 28th May 1st & 10th – Sept 28th The Minister & Mrs Heale attended the County Nursing Association Meeting held at Worcester on May 16th.

American Hospitality

The Minister & Mrs Heale extended hospitality to Sergeant? Robert Heitman of New York – convalescent at an American rest camp near Stourbridge – June 5th – 7th June 14th – 15th June 20th – 21st July 2nd 4th 5th 12th Enquiries were made for him at Bristol Aug 15th letters received from Germany Dec. and from him on arrival home.

On Sept 12th Miss Edith Tallis a former member of the Sunday School introduced James Franklin Guinee [Staff Sergeant] of Chicago U S Army resident near Stourbridge whilst his unit was in England before taking part in the European Campaign, now on his way home. Coming by plane to Warrington he obtained permission to visit Miss Tallis and if her parents consented to marry. The marriage was arranged and consummated on Sept 19th. Mr & Mrs Guinee visited the Parsonage on Sept 27th. Later Sergeant Guinee left by plane for America and Mrs Guinee a G I Bride followed her passage having been signed by the Minister.

The young men of the village continue to be called to the 'Forces' Others after war-service are being demobilised and have returned home including the Minister & Mrs Heale's son Philip – he arrived home at Netherend on Sunday Nov 17th having travelled by plane from Karachi on November 1st.

Jack Smith the only son of Mr & Mrs Smith of Hagley – RAF was reported missing on February 13th. The report of the death of his cousin James Cartwright killed in action in N. Africa last year is noted appropriately in 1944.

The Minister continued to correspond with men and women in the Forces throughout the year- India, Kenya, Egypt, Malta, Canada- The Invasion Forces and those in the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy.

The ARP Wardens Service

On May 27th by command of the Head Warden Mr Wesley Cooper the officers of the various "Posts" gathered at the Hales Owen Grammar School at 11 am. Photographs were taken. The Minister as Post-Warden was accompanied by Mr Charles Basterfield Deputy.

On May 30th the Netherend "Fire Watchers" disposed of their ladders chairs and other equipment by sale. The auction took place in Netherend School.

On June 20th the Minister made the final payment of the A R P monies to the Head Warden Mr Wesley Cooper and the wardens service undertaken by the Minister brought to a close.

The C D Services were called to a dismissal Parade - also a Victory Parade on Sunday June 3rd. The service was held at St Peter's Church Cradley at 3.15pm. Mrs Heale and the members of the Netherend Post responded to the call.

Notable dates of an historic year

Jan 21 st	The Russian Army 45 miles from Berlin.
May 3 rd	The Russian Army captures Berlin
May 8 th	Germany surrenders unconditionally
May 8 th	V E Day
May 23 rd	Dissolution of Parliament.
July 3 rd	Election Day
July 6 th	Bus strike begins [Midland Red Services] ends on July 21 st
July 19 th	Berlin Conference
July 26 th	The Right Honourable Clement Attlee becomes Premier of the Victorious Labour Government.
August 8 th	Atomic bomb employed on Japan
August 9 th	Second Atomic bomb employed on Japan
	Japanese unconditional surrender
August 15 th	V J Day.

1946

It should be recorded that the year opened with a renewal of the preWar custom of a "Watch-night" Service held in the chapel. The sexton Christopher Whiley rang the bell, the villagers began to gather and an appreciable congregation had assembled by 11 30 pm. It was good to hear the bell ringing its clear sounding note into the frosty air, whilst the congregation sang the familiar hymn "Ring out wild bells to the wild sky"[an institution started by Mrs Heale, Philip and the Hough boys Vernon and Donald some 10 years or so ago] a short address followed and the appropriate silence [as the old year passed away and the new began] to measure time. As the sirens, hooters and buzzers noisily announcing the event died away and silence reigned supreme again a short prayer embodying a Salutation to the Dawn was expressed and the Congregation rose to sing – Welcome from God O Glad New Year. The Benediction followed and the goodly congregation passed out and away to their homes, shaking hands with the Minister on the steps of the church, as they filed past. The bell ringing lustily until about 12.30 am.

The Chapel Anniversary was commemorated as customary on the second Sunday in May – May 12th. The visiting minister was the Rev, E G Lee of Brixton London. Miss Bloomer of Colley Gate rendered several solos, and the scholars of the Sunday-school sang two hymns, to maintain the association of the Anniversary with the opening of the Charity-Day schools years ago.

Years ago. This first post-war Anniversary with its renewal fellowships is an indication that many still have an affection for the old chapel, and that worship here in days that are past still has its influences in the minds and lives of the children of those who regularly maintained the services and ministry here fifty, forty, thirty years ago.

The Harvest Festival Thanksgiving was observed with customary chapel decorations. Through the foresight of Mr&Mrs W Hill two fine sheaves of corn were procured wheat and barley – the latter adorned the old gas standards, the former was conspicuously displayed in the “Font” and the “Lectern.” Several bunches of grapes were placed about the pulpit and the “five loaves and two fishes” [made of white pre? Flour] attracted attention. A large block of coal was displayed also. As per custom the Festival was held on the second Sunday of October the 13th. Gifts were distributed to the sick as usual after the Thanksgiving and a sale was conducted by Mrs Lily Attwood on Wednesday 10th.

The National Remembrance Day Commemorations were observed on Sunday November 10th. Attention was called to the change of title for this observance. Its institution after the first war on Nov 11th 1919 was entitled Armistice Day. After the second war the institution is “Remembrance” not “Armistice” Sunday School Scholars gathered in the Parsonage at 10 15 am and heard the radio broadcast of the scene and religious service at the Cenotaph. The Chapel was suitably arranged with plumes of pampas grasses and scarlet poppies, the latter made by Mrs Eagleby invitation of the British Legion, the Minister attended the Remembrance Service at St Peter’s Church Cradley. The service was conducted by the Vicar, the address delivered by the Rev M Wilkes and the Lesson read by the Unitarian minister. The service was held at 3.15 in the afternoon.

The Chapel Committee

Directed by the Chairman Mr William Hill the meetings are called monthly, on the 2nd Thursday evening.

The meeting of February 14th received a letter from the Treasurer Mr G Mole relinquishing the office, the resignation occasioned by continued ill-health, was received with deep regret and concern by all. The matter was referred to the Annual Meeting held on April 18th. Mr Mole’s letter was read by the secretary Mr R Powell and acknowledgements of Mr Mole’s services was expressed by the Minister, officers and members of the meeting. The resignation deeply affects the whole congregation, with the exception of two years or so the office of Treasurer has been held for many years by a member of the Hickman family. Mr Benjamin Hickman, Mr Charles Hickman, Mr General Mole, [husband of Gertrude Hickman] This loosening of the ties of the last remaining old established industrial families of Cradley with the Chapel is an ending of the old traditions. Mr Frank Shaw was unanimously appointed Treasurer. The annual outing to Llandudno on July 11th was greatly enjoyed.

The committee transacted business in May, June, July, September and December. It should be recorded however that faithful and loyal as certain members of the committee are absenteeism continues to lessen its usefulness; if the congregation is to survive, a quickening of interest must be experienced, changes made, the initiative lies with the congregation to institute a revival of interest, it can not be undertaken by the Minister alone.

The Pargeter Trust Fund

The Minister attended the meetings of the Trust held on March 5th June 4th September 17th and December 3rd. Two nominees of the Minister – Miss Mary Pearson of Hayes Lane and Miss Annie Cartwright of Dudley Wood were granted annuities of £20 each.

The Local Education School Managers Meetings etc

The Board of Managers of the Colley Gate- Cradley Schools is called together every first Tuesday of the month.

The appointment of the Minister of the Park Lane Chapel is a County Appointment by virtue that the first schools in the area were those at Netherend erected in 1745 and maintained until the establishment of the County School Boards by the Government the schools were then transferred to the Local Authorities. The Minister is a member also of the Attendance Committee of the Hales Owen School Board, meetings held every 3rd Wednesday of the month. The Minister assisted the Principal of the Technical School, Hales Owen, Mr Johnson Ball in the exhibition of books, pictures, etc of local interest held in July.

Nursing Association.

The Minister was unanimously elected again, President, occasional meetings have been held at the Methodist Church Colley Gate. The work of the Association is well maintained. The two District Nurses are efficient and appreciated. The system of collecting subscriptions from householders, monthly has been successful, additional collectors are needed however.

The Minister made personal contacts with the secretary of the G A in London on Feb 4th Visited the Maidstone Congregation on May 27th and whilst on holiday in Devon spent Sunday September 1st with the Congregation at Crediton.

Signed A J Heale
Minister
Jan 1947

The record of Births Deaths and Marriages for the year can be seen in their respective folios.

Youth Club

The Chapel Committee requested the Minister and Mrs Heale to relinquish their responsibility and oversight of the Youth Club as and from July. In consequence the Minister ceased to be responsible for the refreshments allotted to the club by the local Food Office and Mrs Heale discharged her duties as a Trustee with the Bank.

Mr Edwin Gauden of Quarry Bank was nominated as Leader and accepted by the Education Authorities at Worcester. The Youth Club from henceforth is not in anyway associated with Chapel, excepting that the Chapel Committee grant the use of the schoolroom for its meetings.



Rev. A J Heale and Mrs Lydia Heale